

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, JULY 17, 1918.

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A NEW-YORK BOY IN THE SOUDAN; OR, THE MAHDI'S SLAVE.

By HOWARD AUSTIN
AND OTHER STORIES



At the sight of his rescuer, the young man flung himself in front of the girl and drew his sword. "Stand back!" he cried, "I am a desperate man. I know you, and if you seek to harm this lady, by Allah, one of us shall die!"

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—OR—

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CHAPTER I.

THE AMBASSADOR OF THE MUDIR OF DONGOLA.

It was already well on toward sundown on the evening of January 20, 1885, when the dozen or so half naked Egyptians, negroes and Arabs, who comprised the population of the little hamlet Tokaba, a village situated on the eastern bank of the river Nile, midway between Halfaya and the city of Khartoum, were startled out of their usual lethargy by the ringing sounds of a horse's footsteps at full gallop through their single street.

All rushed to the doors of their wretched huts.

As they looked forth to see what might be the occasion of a sound so unusual in a place where no man ever thinks it necessary to be in a hurry for any reason, no matter how urgent may be the business he has on hand, they beheld a young man of perhaps nineteen, or possibly twenty, mounted upon an Arabian horse of the deepest black, dash through the town at the speed of the wind.

Faint as had the daylight become—for in the Nile valley twilight is a thing unknown—it was easy to distinguish the features of the rider as he galloped through the town.

His complexion was dark and sunburned, his eye dark and flashing, and his hair of the same color, extending well down over his shoulders from beneath a red cap, or fez, which together with his dress, which was that of the native sheiks, or rulers of the wandering tribes of the Soudan, gave him the appearance of an Arab of the highest rank.

He looked neither to the right nor to the left, but spurring his horse to still greater speed, galloped through the streets of the town before the eyes of the astonished inhabitants, and disappeared among the trees of a wooded clump beyond.

"Wallah, ah Ibrahim! But the young Bey is in haste!" cried an old man, stepping to the center of the ill-paved street, and gazing after the flying horseman.

"Now, by the beard of the Prophet, I wonder who he can be! Every day our rest is disturbed by riders and troopers, who run over us as though we were but the sand under their feet. Are there more behind this fellow, think you? Have the forces of the Mahdi descended upon our humble town?"

It was the Cadi, or judge, of Tokaba, who thus addressed himself to a half naked Arab who stood close beside him.

But he received no reply.

Even as he spoke, a second horseman dashed through the little street, causing those who stood near gazing in the direction taken by the youth to scatter right and left.

And this time it was no boy rider that disturbed the peace of Tokaba, but an Arab warrior, mounted upon a horse as pure in blood and black in color as the first.

He was a man in the prime of his life, clad in the white robe and turban of his race, with glittering spurs attached to his naked heels, and holding a spear of enormous length in his right hand, while his left grasped tightly the bridle of his flying steed.

"A spy! good people!—a base spy against the Mahdi, the

Savior of the Soudan!" he cried, as he rushed by the little throng and disappeared, as had done the young horseman in the trees of the wooded clump beyond the town.

The Cadi heard him, the half naked Ibrahim heard him, and so did the dozen or more villagers gathered around; but they only shrugged their shoulders and retreated into their huts, for the inhabitants of Tokaba were upon neutral ground, and cared neither for the success of El Mahdi, the false Prophet of the Soudan, nor for the united forces of the English and Egyptians daily pressing further and further down the valley of the Nile to the relief of the besieged city of Khartoum.

Not so with the boy horseman.

He heard both the cry, and heeded it, too.

"On, on, brave Sultan!" he cried, pressing the spurs to his panting steed. "That black fiend is upon us. On, or we may never reach Khartoum alive!"

As though understanding every word spoken, the noble animal bent himself to the task.

Great flecks of foam fell from his reeking mouth, the perspiration ran in rivulets down his steaming sides.

"Tahl-lel! Tahl-lel! Tahl-lel!"

A wild Arab cry rang through the wooded clump lying close beside the river bank.

"Hold! Infidel dog! Hold! Melek, thou base spy!" shouted the pursuer, now close behind the fleeing boy.

The youth wheeled quickly about in his saddle and cast one glance behind.

Death was closer upon him now than he had thought, for the Arab had already raised his spear, as though to poise it for its deadly flight.

"Crack! Crack! Crack!"

Three shots from a repeating rifle rang out from the trees on either side.

And the boy rider sped on, passed the wooded clump, and emerged in safety upon the sandy plain beyond, the smoking rifle grasped tightly in his hand.

"Saved! good Sultan!" he cried. "Saved from that demon at last. Heaven grant that we may now reach Khartoum unharmed, and fulfill our mission of rescue to the brave Gordon, who alone and unaided, has so long defended the city against the Mahdi's hordes.

The boy rider had spoken the truth.

With a wild yell of agony, the pursuing horseman had dropped his spear and thrown up his arms, and in another moment a riderless horse, with dilating nostrils and panting jaws, dashed past him across the arid plain.

Two hours later a youth strode rapidly through the square upon which fronts the government house or palace of Khartoum, and ascending the steps of the building, was challenged by the guards.

"Gordon Pasha, my men," he said. "I would see him and at once.

"But the pasha has given orders to admit no one save officials of the highest rank. Your name and your business, if you please?"

"My name is Melek," replied the youth. "Say to the pasha

that an interview is desired by the ambassador of the Mudir of Dongola, who has matters of the highest importance to communicate at once."

From one guard to another the word was passed, and in a moment more the visitor to the government house was ushered into a large apartment within its walls.

At a table in the center of the room sat a man engaged in writing by the light of a feeble lamp, while various persons, officers of the Egyptian army, servants and others stood ranged around.

The youth approached with a low obeisance in the Oriental fashion.

It needed but a glance at that tall, commanding form before him to tell him that he stood in the presence of General Gordon, the brave defender of Khartoum, whose fame had spread throughout the entire region of the Upper Nile.

The man at the table raised his head and faced him with calm features and clear, penetrating eyes.

"You are the ambassador of the Mudir of Dongola," he said, rising, and acknowledging the salute. "What is the Mudir's pleasure, and why are you come?"

He spoke these words in Arabic and was answered in the same tongue.

"It was the wish of the Mudir, oh, Bey, that I wait upon you, and declare his renewed allegiance, and convey to you the promise of the assistance of the tribe who dwell under his shadow, of which I am sheik, some 30,000 men—read, oh, Bey! Read the writing the Mudir has sent!"

It was written in the Arabic language.

With a quick glance, General Gordon ran his eyes over the mass of strange characters, showing plainly by the look of intelligence which passed over his face that the written language of Egypt was as familiar to him as the spoken.

"Good!" he said, flinging the paper upon the table and again saluting the youth.

"The Mudir of Dongola has ever been a faithful ally, and the Sultan will reward him in due time. You, then, young man, are Melek, the 'Boy Sheik of the Soudan?'"

"At your service with all my tribe, oh, Bey!"

"And you number?"

"Thirty thousand horsemen, oh, Bey!"

"A most important addition to my little force. And what are you prepared to do?"

"That which your highness may command. If I might suggest——"

"Proceed. At a time like this, with Khartoum in the last stages of a long and withering siege, all suggestions are worthy of consideration, especially such as come from the faithful subjects of the viceroy, who knows the country and its people."

"Then, listen, oh, Bey!" answered the youth, drawing nearer to the English general, and lowering his voice. "For months you have held this city bravely against the Mahdi's forces, waiting for the help from your people which does not come. Each day increases your danger—each day makes your situation more perilous than that of the day before. With my force, and they are all fighters, every one, I propose an immediate attack upon the camp at Abd-ur-rahman, the Mahdi's commander, at the Wells Ekhman, three miles to the left of the city gate. We are bound to defeat the rebellious dogs, and with Abd-ur-rahman's head exhibited above the gatepost of Khartoum, his force scattered, and the path of the Nile clear between this city and Dongola, as it then would be, the treachery and discontent within the city walls, which is everywhere growing, would be checked at once. Boatloads of provisions could reach you from Dongola, Khartoum could then be fed, and with full stomachs, the Egyptian troops of General Gordon would take a vastly different view of the situation from that which they hold to-day."

As the young sheik had spoken these words, the man before him had regarded him with a keen and penetrating gaze.

"Young man," he said slowly, and in English, "I think you are right; but why, may I ask, do you address me in Arabic, when you speak English as well as I?"

"My lord—Bey!"

"Not a word. You are no Egyptian, nor are you of Arabic blood. Your speech betrays you at once; but this is nothing to me—the Mudir's letter is enough. I accept your offer and may heaven grant you success—you understand what I say?"

A momentary hesitation swept over the countenance of the youth.

"Yes, general," he replied, in tones too low to be heard by any other of those around. "I do, but for special reasons, I do not desire my acquaintance with the English language

known; nevertheless, believe me. I am none other than what I claim to be—I am sheik of thirty thousand warriors, the best fighters on the Upper Nile; with them I can do much for you, and unless overwhelmed by superior force, I guess we shall succeed.

The boy sheik had dropped the Arabic and spoke the best of English now.

General Gordon smiled and extended his hand.

"Shake hands, my lad," he said, heartily; "this is a strange land in which we find ourselves, and since I have been shut up in Khartoum I have witnessed many strange things; and I am free to say that one of the strangest is to find an ambassador of the Mudir of Dongola a lad like yourself, who says 'I guess' as would a true American, and speaks English with a twang that betrays him to an old traveler like me at once, as a boy brought up in the city of New York."

CHAPTER II.

THE BOY-SHEIK PLEDGES TO GENERAL GORDON THE ASSISTANCE OF HIS TRIBE.

With a quick exclamation of surprise, the Boy Sheik of the Soudan started back.

"Hold, general," he said in a low tone, still speaking English. "Not a word of this, if you value the assistance which I bring! What I was is my own affair. What I am is yours and that of the Egyptian people. I am but a boy in years, I admit, but my command over thirty thousand Arab warriors is as absolute as though I were the eldest sheik of the Soudan. Do you accept my offer, or reject it? Speak and let me go."

"Accept it, my boy? Why, of course, I do; nor do I seek to penetrate your secrets, though you will admit that it does seem more than strange to me to see an American lad like you sheik of a wild Arab horde. When will you be prepared to move on the forces of Abd-ur-rahman? Is your tribe near at hand, or is it necessary for you to return to Dongola first?"

"They are encamped in the desert, general, ten miles south of Metemneh, not far from the sixth cataract of the Nile."

"Good! And you can reach them——"

"In two days, general, and can have them within the walls of Khartoum in three days more."

"Good again, boy! Christian of Mussulman, American or Soudanese, would there were more like you among these about me; with a few leaders with your pluck and bravery, I could soon crush the false Phophet and his hordes. But I am surrounded by traitors in Khartoum, and hampered by cowards and fools in England, who have abandoned me to work out my destiny alone. But not another word. Do not even look at those about you, as you retire; they are every one false and are observing us closely even now. To your tribe, my lad, and may heaven grant you success. If you accomplish the defeat of Abd-ur-rahman, and the deliverance of Khartoum, believe me, it is in my power to advance you to a loftier position than that of leader of a wild Arab horde. One word before we part. By what means did you enter the city?"

"Under guise of a friend of the Mahdi, and a spy, my lord. I passed the camp of Abd-ur-rahman in safety, for such he believes me to be."

"And you leave——"

"Openly, my lord, and without fear. They believe me devoted to their cause, and will not seek to harm me. Of that I am sure."

"Go," answered General Gordon, pressing the hand of the youth firmly, "and may it be the will of heaven that we meet again."

With a low bow, the Boy Sheik bent and kissed the hand of the brave Englishman before him, and in another moment had passed the guards and left the government house.

Was not the penetrating sagacity of General Gordon correct?"

Was this youth, clothed as he was with rich oriental dress, turban, and jeweled sword, really a native of the far-off city of New York?

Strange as it may appear, such was indeed the case.

He that now trod with firm step the deserted square of Khartoum was none other than a New York boy, who had scarce attained his majority in years, but was, nevertheless, a sheik, or captain, of a wild Arab tribe, and possessed of as brave a spirit, and as firm a determination to succeed in his

perilous undertaking as was the great English commander whose presence he had but just now left.

"Come," he muttered to himself, as he strode along. "Your opportunity is at hand; see that you make the best of it. What a grand triumph it will be if you cannot only accomplish your secret mission—that which brought you to this wild land—but raise the siege of Khartoum as well. With Abd-ur-rahman defeated, and a base of supplies opened by free communication with Dongola, as would then be the case, this city could hold out until the arrival of the English with no trouble at all, and then——"

His sentence remained unfinished, for at that moment soft steps were heard approaching behind him, and a hand was laid upon his person, a little above his waist.

He turned and beheld by his side an Arab boy of about his own age, of dark, olive complexion, mild black eyes, long hair, which reached well down his back.

"Ah! Artime," he said, in a whisper. "You are on hand, I see! Have you moved among the people of the Bazaar during the few days by which you have preceded me into Khartoum, and listened to their conversation? Have you learned the feeling that exists in the city toward the false Prophet of the Soudan?"

"I have, oh, sheik! and Allah be praised that I meet you thus! They are his slaves, his worshippers; they are ready to open the gates of Khartoum to El Madhi on the instant that his forces approach."

"And Gordon Pasha, Artime—what do they say of him?"

"They hate him, oh sheik! They call him an infidel dog, and would kill him if they dared; and, what is more, they know of our visit and its meaning—they know you to be no friend of the Madhi, and swear you shall never leave Khartoum alive."

The youth involuntarily grasped the hilt of his sword, and drew the Arab boy beneath the shadow of an adjoining wall, which shielded a large building of white stone from the street.

"And how did they learn this, Artime?" he said, in a quick whisper. "Can there be traitors among our own tribe, or——"

"No—no, my lord sheik!" cried the boy, quickly, at the same time seizing and kissing the hand which grasped his own. "The Shammar are true to the leader whom they have chosen, but the Mudir of Dongola is a treacherous dog. He sent a spy before you. He fears you, and he fears your tribe. To deliver us all into the hands of Abd-ur-rahman would be his greatest joy. A base spy, in the form of a dervish, or holy man of our Mohammedan religion, has this night been moving freely among the merchants of the Bazaar. He is paid by the Mudir and has exposed your plans. You will be allowed to pass the gates freely, but the men of Abd-ur-rahman will slay you when once without the walls."

"Will they!" cried the youth, with flashing eyes. "By heaven, we shall see. Artime, the brave English governor, has this night accepted my offer of assistance from the Shammar; and if it can no longer be done in the name of the Mudir of Dongola, with the help of my brave men, it shall be done in the name of the Boy Sheik of the Soudan alone. We must never leave by the city gate, my boy, but by the river. Artime, can you swim?"

"Like a duck, my lord sheik."

"Then follow me, my faithful friend. The guard who admitted us at the gates shall await our return in vain—Artime, we must swim the Nile."

The situation of the city of Khartoum is peculiar.

It occupies a narrow neck of land at the exact point where the great river Nile, whose mysterious annual rise furnishes life to the Egyptian deserts, divides into two branches, or, to speak more accurately, where its two great feeders, the Blue and the White Nile unite as one.

To the right of the place where the young sheik and his boy companion now stood, perhaps no more than a hundred yards away, the blue waters of the former stream came pouring down from their long journey from the far-off mountains of Abyssinia, while to the left, perhaps ten times as far removed, the White Nile, whose mysterious sources in the heart of Africa have yet to be determined, joined it, forming the great Egyptian river beyond.

It was the latter stream that Melek proposed to swim.

At every point exposed between the rivers high walls surrounded the city on every side, but once across the great white river, the desert could be gained, and that accomplished, in the darkness which now shrouded the city, the young sheik well knew that he had nothing to fear.

Of the obstacles which lay in the way, he thought nothing. The wide and swiftly flowing river had no terrors for him; could he but once reach its banks and pass in safety the treacherous Egyptian inhabitants of Khartoum—more in sympathy with the Mahdi than their own rulers—he felt that he could easily put the waters of the Nile between himself and his companion and the hordes of the false Prophet, who lay in wait to destroy them without the city walls, at no greater sacrifice than a wetting of their clothes.

But fate had willed it otherwise.

The Boy Sheik of the Soudan was not to swim the Nile that night, nor was he to leave Khartoum alone with his faithful companion.

Even as he spoke, the sound of low music from the curious stringed instruments of the natives was heard in the distance, together with the measured tread of many feet, and the monotonous chanting of a psalm.

Melek drew the Arab boy closely to his side, and both crouched beneath the shadow of the wall.

"Ave Maria gracia plena," chanted the voices, louder and louder, the sound of the music and the tread of the feet increasing with every step.

Suddenly there appeared, just ahead of them, approaching the great white building beneath whose walls they were hidden, a procession of priests in long black robes, preceded by a number of acolytes, or altar boys, carrying long candles in great brass candlesticks before them, and chanting aloud to the accompaniment of the stringed instruments of the musicians as they walked.

A mob of howling Arabs and negroes pressed close behind them.

With a stifled cry, the Boy Sheik grasped his sword, and made a quick movement in advance.

It was not the priests that caused the cry, it was not the acolytes with the burning candles, nor their long white robes, nor the crowd that pressed behind.

In the center of the procession, supported by a priest on either side, walked a young and beautiful girl just budding into womanhood, dressed in white robes, with her long, golden hair streaming down her shoulders behind.

She was weeping bitterly, but none heeded her tears—neither the priests who led her, nor the man who walked just before her—a hideous creature with hunched back, enormous head, and great, staring eyes, covered with huge horn spectacles, to whom she could be seen to frequently speak in an appealing way, but in vain.

"See, oh sheik," whispered Artime, grasping his master's hand. "It is a beautiful lady, whom the Christian dogs are taking against her will to the convent here—that great building behind the wall."

But the Arab boy's words fell upon the empty air, for at the same moment there dashed among the moving procession, which had now reached the convent gate, not ten feet from where they stood, a young man in the dress of an Arab sheik of the desert tribes.

"Stand back!" he cried, with flashing eye, and sword glittering ominously in the light of the burning candles, and before a hand could be raised to stay him, he had seized the weeping girl by the waist, and stood facing the astonished throng.

With a cry of intense surprise and joy, the girl flung her arms about the youth.

"Oh, save me, Fred!" she cried in English, a tongue seldom heard in Khartoum—"save me from that dreadful convent—from these men who would drag me to a horrid fate!"

As she spoke, a dozen hands were upon her, trying to drag her away.

The youth flung himself before her form and faced the howling mob.

"Have a care, men!" he shouted, in clear, ringing tones. "He who lays but a finger on this lady dies! Let him look to his life who dares so much as to touch one hair of the head of the affianced wife of Melek of Shammar, the Boy Sheik of the Soudan!"

CHAPTER III.

THE FLIGHT THROUGH THE STREETS OF KHARTOUM.

The words spoken by Melek were in the Arabic tongue, and were plainly understood and heard by all.

The surrounding priests drew back in amazement at the Mussulman who thus dared to interfere with them, for since

many years the rights of the Christian convent and its priests have been rigidly respected by law in Khartoum, and its priests guaranteed against Mohammedan interference by the express orders of the Viceroy of Egypt himself.

"Who are you, young man?" demanded the foremost of the priests, mildly. "By what right do you interfere with this young lady, whose father here, has confided her to our care? Release her at once, or I shall have you seized and brought before the Cado (the city judge) and punished as you deserve. We have the consent of the father of the girl, and that is all we need."

"Then, by heaven, you'll find that it is not half all you need!" cried Melek, tightening his hold about the girl's waist. "This young lady is my promised wife, and she goes with me! As for that misshapen creature who stands scowling yonder, he had best beware, lest he feel the anger of Gordon Pasha himself. Stand aside and make room for us to pass!"

During all this time, the weeping girl clung to the youth, her eyes fixed on his and filled with an expression of trust and love which plainly indicated that where he went, or how, she was ready to follow him, come what might.

As for the old hunchback, he had until now been unable to utter a word, so great had been his rage and surprise.

The last words of the Boy Sheik had scarce escaped his lips when this man suddenly came close behind him and pressed his great mouth close to his ear.

"Beware, young man!" he hissed, venomously. "I know you, and you know me. Release Christine at once. She goes into yonder convent by my will, and my will is not to be disputed by you. Release her, or I shall expose you as a Christian in Mussulman's dress, and the crowd will tear you limb from limb!"

The words were spoken in English, but with broken accent, plainly indicating that by the speaker the language was but indifferently understood.

With a sudden movement, Melek turned and looked the girl full in the eye.

"Christine," he said, "the time has come at last for you to choose. Will you go with me or the doctor? Speak, we have not a moment to lose."

"With you, Fred," was the instant reply, "with you, if it costs me my life; that man is a father to me no longer, since he would bury me in that dreadful place against my will."

"Then keep close beside me—we can but die together, my darling girl; nothing shall separate us now—not even death itself!"

These words were spoken in English, and save by the hunchback, whom Melek had called doctor, were understood by none about.

The crowd pressed around them, hooting and shouting at the priests, who were held in great contempt by the Mohammedan residents of Khartoum.

It was upon this that Melek had counted.

He was in the dress of the Mussulmans, and he had to work on the religious fanaticism of the mob and they would be won to his side at once.

Meanwhile, the priests held back, fearing the people, and not daring, in the face of their anger, to make a decisive move.

It takes many words to describe a scene like this. The time actually occupied was but the space of a moment alone.

With a wild Arab shout, which he well knew would win the heart of every man in the throng, Melek, still grasping the girl, sprung from the center of the crowd of priests and into the midst of the howling mob.

"Upon the Christian dogs, Mussulmans!" he cried. "This lady is my wife—see, they would take her from me, and lock the wife of a faithful son of the Prophet in one of their religious houses! It is an outrage, an insult in our holy Prophet Mahomet! God rest his soul. Mussulmans, shall this thing be?"

"No! No!" cried a hundred voices from the crowd around.

"Down with the infidel dogs! Kill them where they stand!"

"Come, Artime," whispered the young sheik to the Arab boy by his side. "Now is our time! Keep close behind me, boy, and make for the banks of the Nile!"

The confusion had now become terrible.

The priests, seeing that all resistance was in vain, had started on the run toward the convent gate, followed by the acolytes with their candlesticks, from which the candles had been torn and trampled underfoot by the howling mob.

"Down with the infidel dogs!"

"Death to the enemies of the Prophet!"

Such were the cries heard on every side.

A hundred defenders had risen up for Melek and the rescued girl.

Such a turn in affairs was unexpected, but it possessed strong disadvantages as well.

Would not the attention of the populace of Khartoum be drawn toward him now?

It certainly would.

He was the center of observation for all, and this had been the very thing he had desired to avoid.

Did they suspect his identity?

Did they know him as the sheik of the wild Arab tribe of Shammar, against whom the dervish spy of the Mudir of Dongola had all that day been pouring warnings into the ears of the men who flocked about the Bazaar of Khartoum?

If they did not suspect the true state of the case, the mob were not destined to remain long in doubt, for at the same moment a shrill voice was raised above all others in the crowd.

It proceeded from the hunchback doctor, who rushed about shouting and wringing his hands.

"Seize him, good people!" he shouted, "seize him, for he has robbed me of my daughter! He is a false friend of the Mahdi. He is no Mussulman, but a Christian spy in disguise. He is Melek, the sheik of the Shammar, who is here to betray the cause of the Prophet. Do you not recognize in him the man against whom you were this day warned?"

Had a bomb been thrown among the mob, greater confusion could not have ensued.

Like sheep, the whole throng of Egyptians, fellahs and negroes turned and darted after the young man, who, with the girl, had now passed a considerable distance beyond the convent gate.

"Yes! Yes, it is true!" they shouted. "It is Melek, the sheik of Shammar! Death to him and all his tribe!"

The hunchback stood watching the flying mob and rubbing his hands.

"Aha! Master Fred Morleigh," he chuckled, in that peculiar broken English, which betrays the German at once. "You will cross mein path, will you? Den ve shall see. As for dat pig of a girl, let her go. I shed no tears if dey kill her and you in the pargain. Ve shall see who comes out first best! Ve shall see who gets back to New York with the hidden treasure of the Temple of Num, you, yourself, or me, vat has sworn to possess it—meinself, Dr. Georg Villem Stumpf!"

Meanwhile, the Boy Sheik and Artime, with the girl, Christine, whose fate had been so mysteriously linked with his own, fled precipitately down the now deserted streets of the city of Khartoum, with a frantic mob behind them.

"Courage, Christine!" he whispered, drawing her arm tightly within his own, as they ran. "Courage, darling! They cannot but kill us, and heaven knows that it would almost be worth life itself to feel that after our long separation I had secured you at last for my own."

The girl made no reply.

Her soft, white hand pressed the arm of the youth affectionately, and that was enough.

Who, then, was this English-speaking girl, claimed by the sheik of an Arab tribe as his affianced wife?

That the encounter was a wholly unexpected one to both, was plainly to be seen.

By what strange chance had the pair met before?

It was all a mystery, but Egypt is a land of many mysteries, and of the particular time and place of which we write, the Boy Sheik of the Soudan was the greatest mystery of all.

What strange combination of circumstances could have brought about the presence in Khartoum, the very outpost of civilization in the Soudan, of a New York boy occupying the position of an Arab sheik, and a young girl, not more than eighteen years at most, whose manner and speech betrayed her to be, beyond question, an American also.

But this is something that must be allowed to stand over for explanation until some future time, for the situation of the young pair is far too perilous to permit, for such explanations, the waste of a moment of time.

On, on they ran through the deserted streets of the besieged city of the Upper Nile, for in this direction alone had escape been possible at all.

Could they secure a boat and cross to the other side?

It was this question which was now uppermost in the young sheik's mind.

To remain within reach of the enraged populace, who, excited as they had been by the spy of the treacherous Mudir of Dongola, would surely kill him if he fell into their hands, he felt would be simply madness in itself.

But to cross the Blue Nile offered equal dangers.

The force of the Mahdi, under Abd-ur-rahman, was encamped in the desert on the other side, and even now the horsemen of that general could be seen riding rapidly up and down upon the opposite bank of the river, brandishing their spears and waving lighted torches, evidently signaling to those in the pursuing crowd.

It was Artime, the Arab boy, whose sharp eyes first made this discovery.

"It is useless, oh sheik," he whispered, as they ran. "We cannot cross the Nile—we must not remain where we are. In the name of Allah, what, then, shall we do? The madmen are close behind us, and the followers of the prophet are on the other side of the river. We must find shelter or we are lost!"

With a sudden movement the girl tore herself from the young sheik's side.

"Fly, Fred!" she cried. "Fly—save yourself, and leave me to my fate! I am but a woman, and perhaps they will show pity on me."

"Never, Christine!" replied the young man, with proudly flashing eyes. "Never shall it be said that I abandoned a woman, far less that I deserted the woman I love in time of danger! But if we perish, it shall not be alone. By heaven, some of those cowardly dogs shall feel the weight of my sword on their skulls!"

He drew his sword and, flinging his arm about the waist of the girl, turned to defend her from the approaching crowd.

On they came, running, shouting and gesticulating, now certain of their prey.

They were dressed in rags of every color and state of dilapidation, while some of the less particular had cast aside their scanty clothing as they ran.

A raging, yelling mob of angry, merciless fanatics before them, the river behind them—it was a sorry choice.

Was there, then, no escape for this devoted pair and their faithful friend?

Save by a miracle, no.

Once in the hands of that mob, no earthly power could have saved them.

"Down with the Shammar!" they cried, as they approached. "Down with the spy! Death to the enemy of the Prophet! May the jackals whiten his bones!"

The Arab boy, Artime, turned pale and fell upon his knees.

"We are lost, oh sheik," he cried. "May Allah deliver us from their hands!"

Was the humble prayer of that simple child of the desert heard above?

Such would certainly seem to have been the case, for just as the foremost of the mob extended his body forward to seize the girl and tear her from the arms of the man to whom she clung, a hand was thrust out from behind them, grasping the Boy Sheik by the arm, and had drawn both himself and his fair charge within a small gate which opened from a low, white wall, against which they had stood awaiting their fate.

Nor was the Arab boy forgotten.

As the gate slammed in the very teeth of the howling mob, he also stood within.

The place into which they had been drawn seemed to be the outer part of some large building, evidently the residence of one of the merchants of Khartoum of the richer sort.

Upon either side were long rows of beautiful flowers, date-palms, cocoa-trees, and the like, while the water from a fountain in the center of the court could be heard splashing in the midst of a grove of trees and thick, tropical growth.

But it was not the beauty of the place in which he now found himself, nor the strangeness of his rescue, which caused the young man to spring back in astonishment the instant the gate was shut.

It was the remarkable appearance of the two figures before them to whom they were indebted for escape from instant death.

One was a man of perhaps fifty years, richly clad in oriental dress, while his companion wore the light costume

of the negro slaves, and was in age apparently not far from his master's own.

And yet the difference in their appearance was vast.

The man was above the ordinary stature, and well formed, but hideously disfigured about the head and face.

In spite of his broad turban, it was plain to see that both ears had been cropped off close to his head, while a deep saber cut in the form of a cross disfigured his face, extending from forehead to chin, from cheek to cheek, not sparing his nose, but fortunately missing his eyes.

The man's countenance presented an expression hideous beyond belief.

His companion was in appearance even more singular still.

He was a black dwarf, perfect in form, but not over four feet high.

At the sight of his rescuer the young man flung himself in front of the girl and drew his sword.

"Stand back!" he cried. "I am a desperate man! I know you, and if you seek to harm this lady, by Allah, one of us shall die!"

"Put up your sword, Melek, Sheik of the Shammar," replied the disfigured man, in a quiet voice. "You say you know me. Perhaps you may; if I had wished to do you harm, I had but to leave you in the hands of those who even now are outside, seeking to scale this wall in search of your life. You are no friend of my master, young man, but I would save you and your lady, nevertheless. If you know me, speak! What is your name?"

"I do not know you," answered Melek, "and for your good intentions I thank you; but if you are treacherous, I promise you a match in me. I have never seen you before, but you face has been described to me too often to admit of a mistake. You are Hassan, the Frank, the Mahdi's slave, the most skillful and shrewd of all the lieutenants of the false Prophet of the Soudan!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOY SHEIK MAKES THE PASSAGE OF THE BLUE NILE.

As the Boy Sheik of the Soudan uttered the words noted at the end of the last chapter, a slight flush seemed to overspread the horribly scarred face of the man before him.

He gave a slight start, and seemed to gaze with wistful eyes at the bold young face of the sheik, so full of life and animation as he stood gazing upon him, with his head thrown well back, exposing his well-developed chest and muscular form to the best possible advantage.

It was the face of the man who turns his mental vision backward, and gazes into the distant past.

"You speak truly, and you speak falsely, young man," he said. "Considering your situation, allow me to advise you to have a care as to how you speak at all."

"How so, good Hassan."

"Say what pleases you about myself, but have a care how you speak of the Mahdi, the Prophet of Allah upon earth, the deliverer of the enslaved races of the Soudan. Remember, you are in my power. I can do with you as pleases me."

"True. I spoke hastily, but as you know me, good Hassan, it is useless to hide from you the fact that my tribe are not followers of the Mahdi, nor believers in his claim to be the Messiah, the Mohammedan Christ who has come."

"I know that. Why have you left your tribe, Sheik of the Shammar—what seek you in Khartoum?"

"That is my own affair, Hassan. What concerns me most at present is what you intend to do with this lady and myself."

"That, young man, you shall know later. I have saved your life, so it must be evident I do not seek to destroy it. Shall I tell you what you would do in Khartoum?"

"If you can."

"I can, most certainly. I have followed your every move since the instant you left the palace of the Mudir of Dongola a week ago."

"Impossible. I have traveled miles through the desert on my own swift horse, and alone. How could you or anyone else follow me over those sandy plains without my knowledge, where one can see for many miles around?"

The scarred slave laughed.

"The Mahdi's resources are many," he said, with a ghastly

smile which made his face a shade more hideous than before. "Perhaps you will believe me when I say to you that your visit to Khartoum means that you have offered your own services and those of your tribe to the English dog who claims to rule this city—Gordon Pasha, the so-called governor of the Soudan."

"You have spoken, Hassan. For my part, I have nothing to say."

"It is best that you do not speak, for you can tell me nothing that I do not already know."

"I doubt that; but I shall not try."

"Shall I prove my words?"

"As you please."

"You and this boy by your side—Atime he is called, if I do not mistake—were about to swim the White Nile and join your tribe."

"We were. You have spoken truly there."

"This determination you reached after an interview with Gordon, not an hour ago."

"Of that I have nothing to say."

"But I have. Your conversation was all overheard and noted, young man. It is known that you are no Mussulman, but a Frank in disguise."

"I may be a Frank by birth and a Mussulman in faith."

"That is your claim, I am aware, yet the Shammar may be deceived. But enough of this. Tell me who is this lady whom you have rescued from the priests of the convent, and who now stands by your side."

"Ah, Hassan," replied Melek, pressing the hand of Christine, "there is, then, something that you do not know."

Meanwhile, Christine, to whom not a word of this conversation, which was held in Arabic, had been intelligible, had stood looking wonderingly on.

"Yes," replied the officer of the Mahdi, "I confess my ignorance there."

A momentary hesitation passed over the young man's face.

"Hassan, you are well informed," he said at last. "I am a Frank, as by your people Christians of all lands are ever called, and this the Shammar tribes know full well, so you can work me no injury there. This young lady is my sister. I would convey her to my own tent. Will you assist me to escape? If so, I will reward you well."

Again a strange look overspread the face of the young slave.

"Young man, when you speak you lie," he said, slowly. "You never had a sister, consequently, this young lady must bear some other relation to you. Do not try to bribe me, for in that you will fail. If I deliver you to your tent in safety, it will be but to bring the horsemen of the Shammar to attack the army of Abd-ur-rahman, and work ill to the master whom I love, as I love my life. Until this holy war is ended and the city of Khartoum is yielded to the Mahdi's arms, you must never return to the tents of the Shammar—remember that, once and for all."

"Then it is war between us."

"By no means. It is peace and protection, if you will have it so. I will conduct you and this lady, together with your servant, outside of the walls of Khartoum and to a place of safety. There you must remain until you receive permission to leave."

"And if I refuse?"

The Mahdi's slave clapped his hands together three times in quick succession.

Instantly the garden in which they stood was filled with armed men.

They seemed to rise from behind every tree and shrub—even from the very ground itself.

All bore carbines and stood with their pieces raised and pointed toward the boy and his companions.

"You see," said Hassan, "you have no alternative but to obey me. Nevertheless, believe me when I say that in me you have a friend. It is for your protection that I take the steps I do. Boy, by no possible combination of circumstances could you ever hope to reach the Shammar alive—rest assured of that. You are a marked man. Before you have proceeded one mile on your way, you would have been shot down, even if you had succeeded in making your escape. Come, are you ready? If so, follow me!"

"Courage, Christine!" whispered the young man to the girl by his side. "We have no alternative but to obey. Summon all your fortitude and cling to me."

"To death, dear friend," replied the girl, sweetly. "To death and beyond. Besides yourself, I have now no friend in the world. My father's wickedness has separated me from

him forever. Would that I had heeded your warning years ago."

The boy sheik pressed her hand in silence, and motioning to Artime to hold himself in readiness, turned to the strange man before him once more.

As he did so, he observed that the armed men had disappeared.

They were alone in the garden with the Mahdi's slave, and his companion, the dwarf.

"I am ready," he said, quietly. "Lead on, good Hassan—conduct us wherever you will."

At a sign from the slave, the dwarf now suddenly stooped and seized a great ring in the pavement of the court.

A large stone was slowly raised, disclosing an opening beneath.

Looking down into the opening, Melek perceived a flight of stairs leading to the darkness below.

"Descend," said Hassan, "and follow the dwarf; I will close the opening and come behind."

Lighting a torch, the dwarf sprang into the opening, and led the way down the flight of steps.

He was followed by Melek, who assisted the girl, Christine, while Artime, the Arab boy, followed by Hassan himself, brought up the rear.

With a dull sound, they could hear the great stone close above them, and found themselves in total darkness, save for the flaring torch which the dwarf carried over his head.

Down, down into the darkness, the pigmy led the way, until it seemed that they were about to penetrate the very bowels of the earth.

Suddenly he came to a halt, and waiting for those who followed to approach, turned abruptly to the right, and led the way through a narrow passage, which seemed to have been at one time lined with sculptured slabs of stone, many of which were now broken and fallen from place, upon the faces of which strange figures of beasts and birds could be seen by the light of the flaring torch.

"You are now," said Hassan, speaking in the same calm and deliberate tones, "beneath the bed of the Blue Nile. The river is just above us now."

Both Melek and Christine looked above them in astonishment.

Nothing, however, was to be seen, save the casing of sculptured stone above their heads, but, as they listened, a faint, rushing sound, like the noise of water, could be distinctly heard.

"And is this secret passage generally known?" asked Melek, with evident surprise.

"To but very few," was the reply. "It was built by the ancient Egyptians, in the days of Rameses the Great, more than three thousand years ago. There was once a similar passage under the White Nile also, connecting with this, but that was closed up by falling earth many years since."

"And this leads?"

"To the desert on the east bank of the Blue Nile; but follow Muley, or the young lady will slip upon some of these fallen stones. He knows the way as well as I, for he has traveled this road a hundred times."

"Is his name Muley?" said Christine, to whom Melek had translated this conversation, now becoming interested in the strange situation in which she found herself placed. "He is a comical little fellow, is he not? To what people does he belong?"

"To the Nyam-Nyam, the dwarf race of the Upper Soudan, lady," said Hassan, with great respect. "He has been in my service for many years, and is as faithful a fellow as one could ask. But here we are at the end of the passage. Now we ascend to the earth once more."

As he spoke, a second flight of stone steps became visible, up which the dwarf ran with surprising lightness of foot.

A stone similar to the first was raised, and a moment later the little party once more stood above the ground.

They now found themselves in the midst of a vast, sandy plain, extending as far as the eye could reach.

The stars above them shone in the cloudless atmosphere with incredible brightness; while the moon, which was at her full, illuminated the desert expanse with the light of day.

To the left rolled the waters of the Blue Nile, through which they had passed, while beyond it the lights of Khartoum could be plainly seen twinkling in the darkness of the night.

For a moment Hassan stood silently regarding the scene before him.

"Ill-fated city," he said, musingly. "Yet, but a few days and your doom is sealed."

"Do not be too sure," answered the young man by his side. "The army of the English Franks is close at hand. Who can tell? They may rescue the brave Gordon Pasha yet."

"Never!" the slave of the Mahdi replied. "They are children compared with the following of the Prophet. Conceited fools, who think no way the right way, save their own. They can never conquer the Arabs of the desert by their methods of war. The Sheik of the Shammar knows that I speak the truth. Long before they can reach Khartoum, the city will have fallen, and the fate of the brave Gordon will never be known to the world."

The young man sighed.

"I fear you are right," he said. "I did my best to save him, but I can do no more."

"You would have failed," replied Hassan. "You would have failed, and had it not been for my interference, lost your life. But come, my horsemen approach. Let us mount and be gone. We have far to ride before the dawn of another day."

Even as he spoke, a party of mounted Arabs could be seen approaching.

If Melek had contemplated resistance, he now saw that it would be useless.

A moment later, all had mounted, and were silently wending their way across the desert by the light of the stars.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEMPLE OF NUM.

In advance of the little cavalcade rode five Arab warriors, their bodies enveloped in long tattered cloaks, and spears of enormous proportions resting upon their shoulders.

Behind them came Hassan and his companion, Muley, the dwarf; then Melek and Christine, riding side by side, followed by Artime, and finally, five more Arab horsemen bringing up the rear.

Hassan now maintained the strictest silence, answering only in monosyllables any questions addressed to him by the young man.

Nevertheless, Melek several times observed him turn and furtively regard him, and then continue his way in silence, with something like a sigh.

Hideous as was his countenance, there was still that about this strange man that seemed to draw the youth toward him.

To regard him with distrust was something it seemed impossible to do.

Had he been alone with his faithful Artime, it would have taken something more than the guard about him to have held him prisoner long, but it had pleased Providence to thus mysteriously throw the one being whom this young man loved more than all else in the world under his protection, and he felt that under no circumstances could be desert her, come what would.

For several hours the little party continued to ride in this fashion and in silence.

The night had passed, and a ruddy glow in the east, low down upon the level desert, made it evident that morning was at hand.

"Let us hasten," said Hassan, suddenly turning upon his saddle and addressing those behind him. "Do you see yonder black mass upon the surface of the plain? Here—off to the right. It is our destination at last—it is the Temple of Num."

Looking in the direction indicated, both Melek and Christine could plainly discern a long, low mass of buildings, standing entirely alone amid a little grove of date-palms, upon a small oasis, or fertile spot, where a well of sweet water must necessarily exist, for not otherwise could a tree flourish in the midst of the desert in which they were.

A half hour's ride brought them to the spot.

It was a small expanse of fertility amidst the burning sands.

In the center of the little patch of green stood a building of vast expanse, but only one story in height.

The building could now be plainly seen before them in the dim morning light.

It consisted of a large, oblong area, inclosed on the sides and back by a massive wall, faced with an enormous gateway supported by huge stone columns, and ornamented by winged globes and figures of strange beasts and birds. The gateway was so constructed that it not only filled up the entire front, but projected from either side.

On either side, and standing at some distance from the gateway, rose two vast pyramids, rearing their sharp points high above the building itself.

These were covered with gigantic figures, sculptured in the solid rock.

(To such who read this tale as may be familiar with the city of New York, it may be well to mention that a building constructed upon the general plan of the temple may be seen by them any day. It is the well known Tombs, in Center street—that gloomy prison which holds so many guilty secrets within its walls. In form, this building is modeled after an Egyptian temple, of which that of Num is but one of many still standing upon or near the river Nile.)

As the little party approached, the sun rose above the desert, and at the same instant through the gateway there emerged a procession of white-robed priests, who, with solemn step, filed around the pyramids, chanting a solemn hymn.

Before them was carried the glittering host, which was alternately raised and lowered as they passed along.

With a motion of his hand, Hassan called upon all to halt.

"Let us wait until they return within the gate, my friends," he said. "It is the morning procession of the priests of the Temple of Num, chanting the sunrise hymn. They are strange creatures, these Coptic priests, and form the last remnant of the ancient Egyptian race. In religion, they are half pagan, half Christian, but if disturbed in their devotions, even I can never gain my object with them at all."

"And that is——" asked Melek, doubtfully, as though uncertain whether his question would be answered or not.

The slave of the Mahdi turned quickly and faced him.

"To work good to you and yours, young man," he said, quietly. "My sole object in bringing you to this place is to preserve the life of yourself and this young lady whom you love. In another week Khartoum will be in the Mahdi's hand, and woe betide all his enemies who may then be found within its walls."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"Simply to provide shelter for you until the storm has passed. But you must not leave it," he added. "If you do, your life will not be worth a rush."

The youth made no reply.

It by no means suited his purpose to be thus cooped up in the Temple of Num, or anywhere else.

He, however, did not answer, but remained silently watching the moving procession of white-robed priests.

They passed about the pyramids and entered the gateway again, still chanting their monotonous song.

As the last one disappeared within the temple, Hassan, with a motion to his followers to remain where they were, accompanied by Melek, Christine, the Arab boy and the dwarf, gave rein to his horse, and all five advanced toward the Temple of Num, passed through the gigantic gateway and into the open court.

Leaping from his horse, the slave of the Mahdi approached that upon which the young girl rode, and assisted her to alight.

Melek, Artime, and the black dwarf followed their example.

They stood within the outer walls of the Temple of Num. Save themselves, not a soul was to be seen.

The white-robed priests had disappeared to a man.

The court was paved with stone, and was of enormous size. From the surrounding walls of the temple, at various points around, small balconies could be seen attached, with windows as narrow as the slits in a fortress opening out upon them.

At the lower end of the court there stood a fountain of living water, which seemed to bubble up from the very pavement itself, and this, in the midst of the great, rainless desert, where water is the most precious commodity known, was the strangest thing of all.

A high doorway opening off into the building could be seen behind the fountain, but it was closed.

"At last!" exclaimed Hassan, with an air of relief.

"Young man, we have here a safe retreat for this lady during the coming assault of Khartoum. Here, she can re-

main until it is all over and the city has fallen into the Mahdi's hands. After that I will instruct you as to what must needs be done."

"And I——"

"Must remain here also. Believe me, it is for your sake alone I speak. Do not seek to regain your tribe. Make no effort to leave this temple as you value your life, until you see me again. You are well known to be an enemy of the Prophet, not only to the Mahdi, but to every Arab that traverses the desert from Dongola to Shendy, from Metemneh to Kassala, and even so far as Suakim itself. They have sworn to lay your head in the tent of the Mahdi before the wake of another moon."

"And you, the Mahdi's slave, Hassan the Terrible, whom all men dread, you tell me this, and have saved my life? Tell me, what means this strange interest you feel in my fate?"

"Boy, I cannot tell you."

Again that strange, far-away look in the hideously scarred face, that faint moisture about the eyes.

"Do you act by the orders of the Mahdi when you thus preserve my life?"

A faint smile overspread the countenance of the slave.

"Did the Mahdi but know this night's action on my part, my own head would lie in his tent," he said, quietly. "No, young man, my work in your interest is entirely my own—but not another word! See, one of the Coptic priests of the temple approaches. Promise me that come what will, you will make no effort to leave this place."

"I cannot promise, good Hassan. I am here and in your power, but I fail to understand the matter at all. I——"

"Hush, hush!" whispered the slave. "A priest of the temple is here."

Instantly the face assumed its usual expressionless appearance. He stood erect and waved his hand majestically toward the approaching priest with an air of command.

"Ho, good Copt," he said, "I have brought you three persons for whom I wish shelter and food in the name of El Mahdi, the Prophet of Allah upon earth. See that they are well cared for until I come again, or fear the vengeance of one who has no love for Coptic Christian dogs like you, and who will not leave one stone of your temple upon another if ill befall these whom I have trusted to your care."

"Your will shall be done, oh Bey!" replied the priest, with a low obeisance, known in the east as "salaam." "The lord vicar of this place saw your approach, and has sent me to welcome you. Enter the Temple of Num freely. Your horses shall be cared for, and rest assured that any friend of the Mahdi, heaven rest his soul on the judgment day! shall have a welcome here."

"It is well," answered Hassan. "Conduct the lady and her escort within the temple; I will follow behind."

The Coptic priest made a second salaam, and with a motion to Melek and Christine to follow, started toward the door at the end of the court from whence he had emerged.

Hassan was about to follow, when an Arab horseman, with wild shouts, and brandishing his spear, suddenly dashed into the open space within the court.

"Hasten, oh Bey!" he cried, in a loud voice, "hasten, if you would have us leave this place alive. We have been followed across the desert by men of Abd-ur-rahman—they have tracked us hither and are approaching now. What is your pleasure? Shall we remain and die with you, or shall we flee while time remains?"

At the words of the horseman, the face of Hassan could be seen to visibly pale.

"Take the girl within the temple at once," he cried in agitated tones, and addressing the Coptic priest. "If the men of Abd-ur-rahman find me here, I and my faithful followers, as well as you, are lost. Make the lady safe, and do you, Melek, the Sheik of Shammar, come with me to the temple gate and see how the danger lies."

"No, no!" exclaimed Christine, seizing the young sheik by the arm. "Where you go, I go. No danger is too great for me to share."

All present rushed for the gate of the Temple of Num, whose spacious walls concealed from their view the desert beyond.

The Arab sprung before them and waved his spear in the direction from which they had come.

"Behold, oh Bey!" he cried, in the high-flown, metaphoric speech, invariably used by the inhabitants of the east. "The men of Abd-ur-rahman approach! They are but a cloud in

the distance now, but presently they will swarm like locusts of the valley before the gates of the Temple of Num!"

All looked off upon the desert.

Far in the distance, what appeared to be a moving cloud of dust could be seen, and that no bigger than the hand of a man, low down upon the surface of the plain.

But as they watched the cloud, it seemed to grow and grow, until it became a mass of moving spears, horses and mounted men, all steadily advancing forward in the direction of the Temple of Num.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ATTACK UPON THE TEMPLE OF NUM.

"Too late!" cried the Mahdi's slave, as the truth of the Arab's words became manifest to all. "We can never escape now, and have no alternative but to stand a siege. We must drive off these howling devils that will be upon us in a moment, or all is lost."

Nor was the priest who stood behind them less alarmed.

With a dismal cry, he sprung within the gateway, and disappeared into the temple itself by means of some mysterious door.

Scarce had he done so when the sound of a deep, gong-like bell rent the air.

Dong! Dong! Dong!

At some distant point it slowly tolled.

"To the court!" cried Hassan, with a shout to his men. "It is the alarm bell of the temple. In another instant the great stone portcullis falls, and he who finds himself without the temple then must remain out or scale the walls."

All sprung within the gateway, the Arab horsemen, who had formed their escort, still mounted, following them, urging their horses beneath the arch upon the run.

Scarce had the last one passed into the court when a strange groaning, creaking sound was heard, and an immense mass of solid stone was seen to slowly descend, filling the entire space of the arch.

It was a perfect drop-gate, or portcullis, to use its proper name.

The gateway of the temple was now as solid and impregnable as its walls.

Within the court the quiet which had been so strongly marked upon the arrival of the travelers now no longer remained.

Priests in their long, white robes were dashing hither and thither, popping in and out of little doors, hitherto unobserved, but which now were apparent at twenty points in the walls around.

Mingled with them were black, half naked slaves, who were busy dragging old carbines from some unseen hiding-place in the pavement near the fountain, and which the priests armed themselves with and again disappeared within the walls of the building.

No one paid any attention to the little party, nor to the armed men who surrounded them.

"They are strange creatures, these Copts," said Hassan. "See, they do not even notice us, and yet I am well aware that the one who was with us at that gate has informed them of all I have said, and they would give much to have us away, knowing that the attack is made on our account alone. Nevertheless, we are their guests, and if they were to be murdered to a man for giving us shelter, nothing would induce them to tell us to go, after we have once claimed their protection."

As he spoke, one of the priests, a tall, powerful fellow, with shaven head and a large white robe, approached the place where they stood.

"Welcome, oh Bey," he said. "Welcome to the Temple of Num! The Coptic priests of this cloister are ever friends of the Mahdi and enemies of all who are enemies of his; but we are about to meet attack upon your own account—why, I know not, but from the words dropped from your lips, I learn that the forces who come upon our sanctum are led by none other chief than Abd-ur-rahman, lieutenant of the Mahdi himself. Whom shall we obey? You, who are our guests, and would doubtless bid us refuse them entrance, or Abd-ur-rahman, who will demand entrance to the temple in ten minutes' time?"

"As you please, oh Copt!" replied Hassan, coolly. "It is for you to choose whom you shall serve. I am the Mahdi's slave—I am the dweller in his tent. In his name I demand

protection for this young lady, this man, myself and friends. Do we have it? Or do we pass through yonder gate to be delivered by your hands in those of our enemies without?"

"Not so, oh slave!" replied the priest, with a stately wave of his hand. "You and yours are our guests—we will defend you with our lives!"

"And we can fight, too!" exclaimed Melek. "We are not without weapons. Oh, priest, we can fight as well as they."

"Good!" replied the priest. "To those without our temple the gate is closed. Let the lady retire to our inner cloister, and do you, oh slave, and you, oh sheik, for such by your dress I see you are, hasten to the roof of the outer walls, and there be prepared to resist attack. Abou-ben-Hamed, conduct the lady within my own apartments, and there let her receive every attention our humble establishment can afford."

A priest sprang from the midst of the number who had crowded about, and prepared to obey.

"Must I leave you, then?" cried Christine, clinging to the arm of the young sheik.

"Would it not be better?" he said in English, loud enough for all to hear. "It is you they seek, my darling. I have no doubt Doctor Stumpf is among them. The more securely you are hidden, the better it will be."

Now, the priest who stood before them awaiting to escort Christine into the temple also heard these words.

As they were spoken, both Melek and Hassan, who were closely regarding him, noticed a peculiar expression pass over his face.

He was a man beyond the middle age, and of form and features far different from those about him.

Certainly his face was that of a European; indeed, his features were all Celtic to a marked degree.

"No, no, Fred!" exclaimed the girl, drawing closer to her preserver than before, "I cannot leave you. I can die if necessary, but don't ask me to separate myself from you again until we are separated by death. I will stay well behind you on the walls, and Artime shall protect me from harm."

"Be it so!" replied the young sheik. "Artime, I confide this lady to your care."

Then turning to the priest:

"We will remain together," he said "lead the way, oh Copt, to the station on the outer walls of the temple. We will give these fellows a warm reception if they dare to bring an attack!"

"Bravely spoken, my boy," said Hassan, "and no more than I should have expected from a spirit as bold as yours. Come, let us follow the priests, for I hear the tramp of the horsemen without even now."

Following the lead of the priests, they now entered the temple, and passing through many high, studded apartments, and up a flight of winding stairs, found themselves upon the roof of the Temple of Num.

It was flat, and paved with blocks of massive stone, while above it rose the solid outer walls, far above their heads, well supplied with loopholes, through which attack could be made without danger from fire below.

Before leaving the courtyard, Hassan had placed five of his armed men in position to guard the gate.

The remainder accompanied them to the roof.

Nor had the priests themselves, meanwhile, been idle.

Dozens of carbines, kegs of powder, and an abundance of ball had been deposited upon the roof, and there every man stood fully armed, the determined expression of their countenance plainly indicating that they knew how to fight as well as pray.

Such men were the Copts of the Temple of Num, the last remnant of the once powerful native Egyptian race.

Nominally Christians, but in reality followers of a religion peculiarly their own, in their desert home they were used to frequent attack from the wandering desert hordes, and to them armed defense of their sacred shrine was nothing new nor strange.

Nor were they an instant too soon.

As they gained the roof, a loud shouting was heard from the ground below.

"They are here already," said the superior priest, who had accompanied them, approaching the walls and peering through the loophole which overlooked the ground.

Both Melek and Hassan followed his example.

Below a vast horde of half naked horsemen, both Arabs

and negroes, could be seen gathered about the temple, several of whom were even now thundering at the gate.

At their head appeared a man of gigantic proportions, whose dark skin rendered it difficult to determine whether he was by blood an Arab or a negro from one of the wild tribes of the Upper Soudan.

His body was clad in a loose, flowing robe of light-colored plaid stuff, while his head was protected by a pointed helmet, not unlike that worn by the German troopers, from below which descended a coat of mail, completely covering his neck and shoulders, and being formed of a vast number of minute steel rings, closely interwoven one within the other, all glittering and shimmering in the morning sun.

He was mounted on a milk-white horse of the purest Arab breed.

Behind the chief a number of captives appeared, evidently taken during their night march upon the temple, who were closely bound together by means of strong cords passing about their arms and shoulders, and attached to a great beam or log which rested upon their naked, bleeding backs.

Upon the ground, here and there, fierce, half naked Arabs squatted, smoking cigarettes and preparing their guns, spears and shields for the conflict to come.

The superior of the temple drew back and crossed himself devoutly.

"It is Abd-ur-rahman himself!" he exclaimed, in frightened tones. "It is the fiercest fighter in the Soudan."

By the side of the chief there stood a hideous creature in European dress.

He was a hunchback, with an enormous head, and great, staring eyes, covered with huge spectacles of horn.

It was the man who had tried to force the girl to enter the convent at Khartoum.

"Keep well back, Christine," whispered Melek, drawing to the young girl's side. "It is indeed you and myself whom they seek. Your father is at the head of the force below."

"Behold!" cried the superior, suddenly. "My enemy approacheth. We will now learn what this man of blood desires at our hands—whether it be peace or war. By a secret passage from beneath the temple, known only to myself and my fellow priests, I have dispatched one of our order, mounted upon a fleet horse, which we keep ever ready for moments of danger such as this. See, he approaches now. Listen, and mayhaps, if your ears be keen, you may distinguish what is said."

Even as he spoke, a Coptic priest, clad in a loose, flowing robe of the purest white, and mounted upon a black horse, was seen slowly riding toward the position taken by the Arab chief.

Extending his hand in friendship, he addressed the warrior in tones inaudible to those upon the temple roof.

Although the words uttered by the priest were spoken in too low a tone to be distinguished, the reception with which they met was easily made plain.

Raising his sword in his mailed right hand, and brandishing it at the mounted man before him, Abd-ur-rahman answered the mild address of the priest with a wild, discordant cry.

"Back! Back, base Copt!" he shouted, in his own language. "Back to those who sent you, and demand the surrender of the infidel dogs! Deliver unto the men of the Mahdi Melek, the Shammar, the traitorous spy, and the Christian maiden, daughter of the Mahdi's friend, whom he has stolen away."

"Return, brother! Return to the temple!" cried the superior, in a loud voice, at the same time bending over the roof. "It is useless to parley with men like these—return to the safety of the Cloister of Num!"

With a quick motion of the rein, the priest wheeled his horse abruptly, and disappeared behind the temple walls.

Even as he did so the conflict began.

It was precipitated by the priests themselves, who, in answer to the challenge of the Arab chief, rained a volley of bullets upon them from the walls above.

This was followed by a perfect shower of ball from the Arabs, which rattled against the walls of the temple and over their heads, many falling harmlessly at their feet.

From the Arab host there arose with shouts and cries, but the priests returned the fire in silence, and with far more telling effect.

The high walls afforded complete protection to those upon the roof.

For an hour the contest waged fiercely.

Hundreds of the besiegers had fallen by the sure aim of Hassan, Melek, and the priests, while of all upon the roof not more than three had been hit at all.

"They cannot hold out much longer," said the slave, looking through the loophole again; "see, they are wavering even now! They turn to fly! But, no—Allah protect us! What is this?"

All pressed toward the loopholes and looked down.

A loud cry of triumph had issued from a hundred throats of the wild Arab horde, and they could be seen pressing toward the temple gate.

"The gate! The gate!" shouted Melek. "They have forced the gate and entered the court!"

"Heaven protect us all! It is treachery!" exclaimed the priest superior, turning pale. "The gate is impregnable! It must have been raised by some one within. To the secret vaults of the temple! Oh, friends, hasten, or we are lost!"

It was even so.

As the superior of the Temple of Num spoke these words, the hosts of Abd-ur-rahman, with wild shouts and yells, poured into the open court beneath the walls.

Shouts! Cries! Wild, barbarous yells rent the air!

Crashing cimeters, cracking carbines, fierce exclamations of rage and pain!

Such were the sounds that filled the courtyard of the Temple of Num.

The priests on the roof ran hither and thither, frantic with fear.

Melek flung his arms about Christine, ready to die in her defense.

Meanwhile, Hassan stood calmly surveying the scene from a loophole in the inner wall.

His face was deathly pale, but he spoke no word.

He evidently realized that so far as he was concerned, speech would be in vain.

As the boy sheik was about to join him, he suddenly felt a hand placed upon his shoulder.

"Young man," whispered a voice in his ear, "if you would save yourself and your girl, follow me. Speak to no one. Don't look behind!"

The words were spoken in English, but with a rich, full Irish brogue.

Turning about, he saw the priest whose peculiar looks he had noted in the yard standing before him.

Without another word, the man turned and hastily descended a stairway leading down from the roof to the interior of the temple below.

Lost in wonder, Melek, drawing Christine with him, detached himself from the crowd, and followed the man.

What strange happening was this?

A Coptic priest of an Egyptian temple of the Soudan speaking English, and with an Irish accent, too.

There could be no mistaking the words, nor could the rich brogue of a son of the Emerald Isle ever be mistaken for the speech of any other manner of man by one who had ever heard it before.

They were now in a dark passage midway between the roof and the ground.

The priest flung open a door and drew them into a large hall, supported by tall columns extending to the roof.

The door behind them closed with a bang, and the Boy Sheik of the Soudan stood within the great hall of the Temple of Num, with the young girl, Christine, by his side.

"Whist! whist, honey!" said the man beside him, seizing his hand and drawing him forward. "It's meself that'll see you out of this scrape all right. I'm a throe lady's man meself, an' I'll never see this lady harmed by these yelling Arab devils. Moreover, it is plazed I am to see a countryman of mine, for I am an American meself, so I am; an' if ye find me a Copt in Egypt now, by the same token, I was wanst a cop in the city of New York."

The Irish priest, whose name he said was Dan, related to our two friends how he came to be with these strange people, and it was a tale of strange adventure, of which we have not the space to give here.

Dan led them to a trap door and they descended to a lower cavern beneath the temple. They left Christine her for a short while and proceeded to explore the passage. When they came back, Christine had disappeared.

Suddenly they smelled smoke, and loud cries were heard above them. The temple was in flames.

"Come on," said Dan, as they heard footsteps approaching them rapidly; "we will hide in the mummy pit."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE OF NUM.

As the Irish priest spoke these words, the sound of the rushing of many feet was heard upon the stone steps leading down into the mummy-pits from the chamber above.

For the boy sheik and his companion escape was impossibility itself.

Be the danger what it might, they had no alternative but to face it; there was no place of refuge which offered the slightest opportunity for successful hiding.

To crawl into any of the empty niches which had contained the mummy-cases was out of the question. Even could they have breathed in such a place, there was no time to accomplish such a move.

In another instant the crypt was filled with a dozen flying priests of the temple, their white robes all torn and bedraggled, trailing behind them, many of them wounded and covered with blood.

Pressing closely behind came the half-naked warriors of Abd-ur-rahman, uttering wild cries and shouts.

In an instant the silence of this underground pit had been changed to pandemonium itself.

The flying priests heeded not our hero nor his companion, who closely hugged the wall, but made a dash for the stairs beyond, and rained fierce blows upon the great stone trap which blocked their path.

That which had not been accomplished by the efforts of two was accomplished by the united efforts of the frantic priests.

The great stone was forced from its place and the way was opened. They rushed up the stairs like madmen, and were heard hurrying through the passage beyond.

After them flocked the Arabs, pushing and elbowing each other in their mad flight.

Meanwhile, the atmosphere of the crypt had grown even more hot and stifling; it was plainly evident that the temple was in flames.

Both the boy sheik and the priest were in the shadow of the dimly lighted apartment, the gloom of which was now increased tenfold by the ever-increasing volume of thick, stifling smoke.

As the Arabs rushed through the crypt and up the stone steps beyond, making the vault ring again with their wild shouts and cries, Melek crept softly in the direction opposite to that which they took, hugging closely to the wall as he moved.

The priest followed him.

They were now in that portion of the mummy-pits in which lay piled the loose bones and skulls.

Had Melek been alone, clad as he was in the dress of the Arabs themselves, it is possible that he might have stood some slight chance of gaining the stairway unobserved by the rushing throng.

But the white dress of the priest made too conspicuous a figure even in that dim light.

Scarce had they advanced ten steps when they were observed.

"Kill him! Kill the infidel dog!" was the cry from twenty throats, spoken in the Arabic tongue.

With drawn cimeters the fierce warriors sprang forward. In another instant both our hero and his companion would have been laid lifeless at their feet.

The ready Irish wit of the priest alone intervened between them and death.

"Back! Back!" he shouted. "Disturb not the bones of the prophets which lie buried in this holy place!"

With a wild gesture, he threw himself upon his knees and stretched his form upon the pile of bones.

Now, the superstition of the Arabs is a matter well understood by all.

Probably no race of men on earth will pay deeper reverence to the remains of the dead than do they.

To take life is nothing in their eyes, but to disturb dead bones is a heinous crime.

The hands were dropped, the cimeters dropped harmlessly to the sides of those who raised them.

"Rest in peace, oh priest!" cried one. "The bones of your prophets shall be undisturbed. It is but for a moment—flames will soon consume both you and them!"

As they spoke, they hastened after their fellows up the stone stairs.

With one bound the two men now ascended the flight of steps down which the Arabs had come.

The smoke increased with every step they took, mingled with the crackling of wood and the roaring of flames.

They were now at the top of the steps and at the entrance of a high studded hall.

It was filled with dense, stifling smoke.

At a distance the roar of the flames could now be distinctly heard.

"Come!" shouted the priest. "One dash through the smoke, and we can gain the secret passage to the outer air!"

"But Christine!" cried the youth. "Are we to abandon her to the mercy of the flames, or, what is worse, to the mercy of those fiends below?"

"But what can we do! Howly murther! what was that?"

It was a groan not a foot ahead of them—a veritable groan, and evidently proceeding from some one lying on the floor.

"There is some one wounded—some one suffering near us!" exclaimed Melek. "One moment, Dan. I cannot pass it by unheeded."

Suddenly there issued from the blackness of the smoke these words, spoken in good English, and in tones of one in mortal agony:

"Oh, heaven! may thy curse rest upon the treasure hid beneath this ancient temple. It has been the evil star of my race, and now comes death itself—death to me and mine! Help! Help! if there is help to come!"

"Who is there? Who calls for help?" cried the boy sheik, groping his way toward the sound.

"Here! here!" cried the voice. "It is I—Hassan! Melek the Shammar, is that you? Help! for the love of heaven! I suffocate! I burn!"

The priest was for leaving him lay, but the young man heeded him not.

He continued to grope his way through the hot, stifling air, which increased in its density with every step.

Suddenly his feet came in contract with the form of a man lying prostrate upon the floor.

One glance at the face, all scarred as it was, proved sufficient.

"Lead on, good Dan!" cried the youth. "This man saved my life but yesterday. I would be but a poor creature did I refuse to save his to-day."

Seizing the now apparently lifeless form of the slave in his arms, Melek sprung after the priest, who led the way through still another secret door, down steps, through mysterious passages, until at length they stood in safety without the Temple of Num.

For two hours following the flames burst forth most fiercely from the openings in the temple walls.

Every portion of that ancient cloister capable of affording food to the fiery destroyer fell prey to its stern demands.

To the followers of the false Prophet came the victory.

The temple was sacked, and save for the walls, was completely destroyed.

Of the priests, such as escaped the flames, were murdered in cold blood without the temple itself, and their bodies suffered to lie exposed on the sandy plain.

Flushed with victory, loaded with plunder, satiated with blood, the fierce Arabs, following their leader, Abd-ur-rahman, as the day began to wane, gathered together their captives, their horses, their camels and their plunder, and rode away toward the doomed city of Khartoum.

Standing at the side of a camel, at the edge of the little oasis in the desert, is a young man in the dress of a European traveler, who, with rifle in hand, gazes toward the now ruined walls of the Temple of Num.

At a short distance behind him crouches another camel, with the Irish priest standing by his side, while a little in the rear, and partially concealed by the camel's flanks, is a tall, manly form in Arab dress, with a fearful disfigurement upon his face.

Two saber-cuts extending from forehead to chin, had horribly marked that face in the form of a cross.

To his eye was raised a powerful field-glass, through which he gazed across the plains.

"It is as I thought!" he cried, advancing toward the youth at the camel's side. "Melek, look for yourself. Yonder, mounted upon camels, are two men and a woman riding

across the desert, and if your young eyes are as sharp as mine you will see through this glass that the woman is none other than Christine!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A GLANCE BACKWARD INTO THE PAST.

By what strange combination of circumstances had it come about that a New York boy and girl should be found in this wild, lawless country of the Soudan?

Probably no nation on earth is more clannish than the Arabs, nor is there a language spoken more difficult to learn than theirs, and yet Melek, the Boy Sheik of the Shammar, spoke it perfectly, and to acquire this must have taken the best years of his life, unless, indeed, Arabic was taught him as a child.

Now, as our young hero was not over twenty, these statements seem hard to reconcile.

He had not the advantage of years, consequently the latter supposition is the only tangible one which we can assume.

And the assumption would be correct. Melek—or, as we have heard him call himself, Fred Morleigh—had begun to learn the difficult Arabic language, with its strange letters, which more resemble pot-hooks than anything else, when he was yet a little child.

Fred Morleigh had been taught this tongue with a definite purpose in view, and that purpose can only be learned by our readers by a glance back into the past.

The time is in the year 1879. The place is the City of New York.

Within an old-fashioned brick house on Third street, well down toward Avenue D, in the latter part of August, in the above mentioned year, at something after five o'clock in the afternoon, a sad scene, and yet a common one, was transpiring—a scene through which every one of us must some day pass, so sure as we are born into the world and breathe the breath of life.

This scene was death.

The death of a mother in the presence of her only child, and that child a boy of some fourteen years.

Upon a bed in one corner of a sick-room, which was comfortably furnished, considering the poverty of the neighborhood in which the house was situated, lies a woman of not more than forty, pale and emaciated, tossing to and fro.

Her name was Susan Morleigh. Among her neighbors she was known as a widow, her husband not having been seen for many years, and all believed him to be dead.

By her side, and weeping bitterly, stood her boy—her son. "I have just come in from school, and the nurse told me that you were worse and wanted to see me alone."

The sick woman opened her eyes and smiled faintly, and extending her hands, drew her boy to her breast and kissed him.

"Yes, Fred," she replied, in a low, faint voice, "my hours are numbered; this dreadful fever has done its work and I have but a few short hours to live. There is nothing left for me in life, but to you there is much. The time for you to enter upon your mission has come at last."

"My mission, mother? What is that?"

"Sit by my side, my boy. Clasp my hand tightly, and I will tell you. I am about to confide to you a secret, Fred, which deeply concerns your future life."

Seating himself by the bedside, the boy clasped his dying mother's hand, and with a fond pressure upon it indicated that he was prepared to hear all that she had to tell.

"Fred, do you remember your father?" she began, fixing her eyes upon her son.

"No, mother. I remember no life but this—living here alone with you."

"And yet your father remained with us until you were nearly three years old. Ah! those were the happy days when I lived in the enjoyment of my husband's love, before his brain became possessed with the craze for gold."

"But, mother, my father is dead, is he not? You always told me so and bade me ask no more."

"That is something I do not know. Something it must be your work to learn. Listen, and don't interrupt me with a word, for my breath is short, and I have much to say to you."

Fred simply pressed the hand he held once more, and did not speak.

Through many weary weeks he had been by his mother's side, and had learned to obey her slightest wishes no sooner than they were expressed.

"Fred, I was married to your father sixteen years ago this very night," began the lady, with something of a tremor in her voice.

"He was a doctor just entering life. He was possessed of some small means, with a part of which he bought this house, and started his practice in the locality in which we now reside.

"Money and patients came slowly, but they would have both increased with time, had he but the patience to wait.

"He was the most ambitious man I ever knew. I was content with little so long as I possessed my husband and my child. Not so with him. He thought of nothing but money—money night and day, and yet it was not for himself that he desired it, but that his wife and boy might have honor and position in the world, together with all that wealth would buy.

"So things went on for several years, our slender store increasing day by day, until at last there came a time when all was suddenly changed.

"Your father was an Englishman, who had come to this country when but a youth. His mother had been a woman of some little property, all of which she bequeathed to him at her death; his father had, for some mysterious reason, gone into the wild country of Upper Egypt years before, and had there disappeared and was never heard of again.

"Not only was this disappearance most strange, but what was more so, my husband's grandfather, his father's father, had disappeared in precisely the same way.

"At his mother's death a certain mahogany casket had been left behind. This was deposited with the family lawyer, with instructions to have it delivered into your father's hands only when he had attained his thirtieth year.

"This occurred when you were three years old, my son. The casket was sent from England to our humble home, and with its arrival the sunlight went out of my life forever.

"It contained a family secret, Fred—a secret which had been the curse of the Morleighs for two generations before. To destroy it would have been the wisest thing this mother could have done, but she otherwise viewed it. By her course, she intended to conceal it from her son until he reached years of judgment and discretion. She might as well have disclosed it in his earliest youth.

"That your father lost no time in examining the contents of that casket, you may readily believe; and it was the knowledge thus acquired that took him to Egypt, as it had done his father and grandfather before him, and, like them, his fate became involved in mystery, for he has never returned.

"It told of a vast treasure discovered in a ruined temple upon the shores of the Red Sea by your great-grandfather, hidden by himself and his guide, an Egyptian Coptic priest, more than seventy years ago.

"The hiding place chosen was another temple, still occupied by the priests of the Coptic faith, and situated not far from the banks of the Nile. After returning to England, your great-grandfather fitted out a vessel and returned to the Red Sea, determined to possess himself of the treasure, but neither he nor his ship was ever heard of again.

"He left behind him a full and detailed description of the whole matter as a legacy to his son, who in due time went to Egypt in search of it.

"What became of him was never known to this day.

"Such was the secret of the mahogany box, which your father saw for the first time when you were three years old.

"He was no wiser than his fathers before him. He read the papers in the casket, and in reading them became possessed of the same frenzy as they, and in two months' time had started for Egypt in search of this accused treasure himself."

"And was never heard of any more than they," said the boy, sadly. "Mother, can this be so?"

"It is, my son," replied the dying woman, weeping bitterly. "I received one letter from Alexandria, another from Cairo, and that was the last. That was eleven years ago, yet somehow I cannot believe him dead. To me he is living still, though how or where, or why he does not return, I cannot tell."

"And this is the mission you wish me to undertake, mother?"

"Fred, you have guessed it. It is my desire that you go out to Egypt as soon as I am gone, and learn, if you can, your father's fate."

"And the treasure?"

"Never dream of it, my son. Never dwell on it for an instant, lest it prove a curse to you, as it has to all your race. Find your father, bring him back in safety, and if a mother's love and blessing can reach her son from heaven, mine shall descend on you."

"But the mahogany casket—"

"It is beneath my pillow. There, place your hand upon it. Do not open it until I am dead."

Obedying the command of the dying woman, the boy drew a small, square box of solid mahogany from under the pillow beneath her head.

"That is it," said the mother, faintly. "Open it when I am gone, my son—open it in the closed room, of which I now give you the key."

"Mother! Mother! don't speak of dying so! What am I to do when you are gone?"

"Much, my son, much! Kiss me, Fred—I am weak—I faint. Oh, heaven, how dark it grows!"

And the sufferer extended her hands as though groping for those of her son.

"I—am—dying!"

"Mother! Mother! you must not go!"

Fondly the boy pressed his lips to that pallid face, and kissed her again and again.

"Swear!" she murmured faintly. "Swear that you will find your father or learn his fate, and I die in peace!"

"I swear it, mother. I swear it most solemnly!"

She gave a short gasp and was dead.

Fred heard a sound as of footsteps and turned suddenly.

A man stood behind him, enveloped in a long, black cloak, with his head and the upper portions of his body thrust within the half open door.

His form was bent and crooked. His back was badly haunched; he wore a pair of huge horn spectacles over his eyes.

CHAPTER IX.

DR. GEORGE WILLIAM STUMPF.

So noiselessly had the door of the sickroom opened that Fred Morleigh had not heard a sound.

How long had this man been standing in his present position.

That was something he did not know.

Had he overheard the last words of the dying mother to her son—witnessed the transfer of the mahogany casket—heard and comprehended the oath the boy had taken?

"What do you want here, Doctor Stumpf?" he demanded, drawing back and standing between the man and the bed.

"I heerd your mother vos very pad, Fred, und I schust coom around to see if I could not hellup you, my poy, as a frent of the family's."

"Doctor Stumpf, I need no help. Our family physician will come here when we send for him. My mother is dead!"

"Did your mother leave any dying message?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Fred, I vos your father's frent. Und I vos your mother's frent, too. Did your mother not intrust you to my care? Didn't I teach you the Arabic language, to speak like one native of Arabia itself?"

Doctor Stumpf endeavored to obtain the mahogany casket from the boy, for he was aware of its value.

Fred looked at the face of this man before him in puzzled surprise.

It was wreathed in a hideous grin, perhaps intended for a smile.

He knew this German doctor well enough. He was a neighbor, living on an adjoining street, and to him the boy had been sent daily since his early youth to study the Arabic language.

Dr. George William Stumpf was his name. He practiced medicine on such as cared to employ him, and besides this, taught, read, and spoke almost every language under the sun.

Why Fred's mother had made him learn a language of so little apparent use as Arabic, he had until this moment never understood. But now all was plain to him.

She had but taken the necessary steps to prepare him for the work he had to do.

Fred resolved to keep the box and work out his affairs after his own fashion.

"You had better gife me dot box."

"The box is mine, and I shall keep it myself. You know the way out of the house. Go, and leave me alone."

In the little house which she had passed from life, Susan Morleigh had, with the exception of a solitary servant, lived alone with her son.

Summoning this servant—a stout Irishwoman—Fred, in a few quiet words, informed her of the sad event which had taken place, and bade her go for the family physician at once.

As the woman parted in obedience to his order, he closed and locked the front door behind her, a precaution which he had already taken with the door of the room in which the body of his mother lay.

It was now entirely dark. Without, a storm was rising, and the low rumbling of distant thunder could be plainly heard.

A strange calmness seemed to come over the lad.

Only but a few hours before he had been but a boy in thought and motive, as well as years; now, by a sudden transformation, he had become a man.

"I will find him if he lives," he murmured, as he ascended the stairs; "and if he lives no longer, I will at least keep my oath to the letter, for, come what may, I shall learn his fate."

He determined to begin at once. There was no time like the present—he would commence that very night.

"Come!" he said to himself, as he approached the door of the room which he had left but a moment before. "The best service I can do my dear mother now is to obey her last commands. I'll get the mahogany casket and enter the closed room at once."

In the house where Fred Morleigh's life had been passed one room had, since his earliest recollection, remained tightly closed.

The reason for this he could never learn.

It was the room adjoining the one in which his mother had breathed her last.

Softly entering the apartment in which the body lay, he presently returned with the casket in his hand, and again closed and locked the door.

He now stood before the door of the closed room to explore the mystery of which had long been the one desire of his life.

Close a door, and a boy wants to open it. Tell him that he must not, and the desire is increased tenfold.

So it had been with Fred. During all the years he could remember, no one had entered this room, nor had its door even been unlocked.

What had been the motive for proceeding so singularly, he had never known.

Now he was about to learn.

With trembling nerves and beating heart, he lit a lamp which stood in a niche in the wall, and putting the box under his arm, took it in his hand, and inserted the key in the lock of the mysterious door.

A large apartment, well furnished, and presenting every appearance of recent occupation, was exposed to view.

In the center of the room was a flat-topped desk covered with books and papers, scattered carelessly around.

Upon this desk, or rather table, stood a student's lamp, a chair was drawn up against it, a pair of slippers stood by the side of the chair, and upon an ash-receiver rested the stump of a half-smoked cigar.

In one corner stood a large bookcase, a glance at which proved it to be filled with medical works, while opposite stood a second case, filled with surgical instruments of various kinds.

Upon several hooks against the wall hung articles of wearing apparel, coats, trousers, hat, and outer wraps, all of which had evidently been worn by a man.

"It is my father's room," murmured the boy. "It has never been disturbed since he went away."

A strange awe crept over him. It seemed as though he had been brought face to face with the dead.

Setting the lamp upon the desk, he laid the mahogany casket by its side, and gazed about the room, with tears pressing to his eyes.

Just as Doctor Morleigh had walked out of it, eleven long

As the boy looked about him, his eyes fell upon a sealed years before, so it evidently had been suffered to remain until now.

letter, lying on the desk in a prominent place.

It was addressed to himself in a full, round hand:

"Mr. Fred Morleigh, Jr."

Tha' is the way the superscription read.

"It is a letter from my father," he breathed, as with trembling hand he broke the seal.

To this boy's young mind it seemed as a message from the dead.

It was as follows:

"To my dear son Fred:

"When this reaches you, my beloved boy, if it reaches you at all, you will either have attained the age of twenty-one, or your dear mother will have passed away. I leave to-night for Egypt, on a mission which has cost the life of both my father and his father before him. I go to seek the treasure hidden by my grandfather beneath the temple of Horus, which is situated twenty miles eastward from Khar-toum, in the country known as the Soudan. Should I never return, the recovery of this vast treasure—the nature and exact location of which is fully described in the papers contained in the mahogany casket—devolves on you, and it is my express wish that you devote your life to its fulfillment. It belongs to my family by right. It is so vast that it will rank its possessor with the money kings of the earth. Heaven grant that I may succeed in obtaining it, for the sake of my wife and my darling boy; but if failure is the fate in store for me, my life-work—which was the life-work of my father before me—must devolve upon you. Farewell, my son. May heaven's blessing rest upon you.

"Your fond father,

"Frederick Morleigh, M. D."

The paper fell from the boy's hand.

"He is dead," he said, softly to himself. "He must be dead, or we would have heard tidings of him long ago."

Crash!

A terrific peal of thunder broke upon the air.

A lightning flash of fearful brilliancy succeeded, plainly visible through the slats of the tightly closed blinds.

Instinctively the boy sprung toward the window, and pressed his face against the panes.

A terrible storm had burst. Without, the rain was falling in torrents on the street below.

His back was turned but for one instant.

But in that instant a dark form glided into the room, bent over the desk and departed as noiselessly as it had come.

"I'll examine the box now," muttered the boy, turning from the window, and approaching the desk once more. "My work is before me. I must begin at once, and I can't sleep until I know what I have to do."

He put forth his hand for the mahogany casket.

The place it had occupied was empty.

In that moment of time during which his back had been turned the mahogany casket had disappeared.

CHAPTER X.

FRED CALLS ON DR. STUMPF.

A sudden sensation of terror seemed to possess the boy. That he was utterly alone in this land, save for the dead body of his mother lying in the adjoining room, he felt perfectly sure.

He sprung to the door and peered out into the darkened hall.

There was no one to be seen.

"Hello, there! Is there any one below?"

There was no answer to the boy's call. The house was perfectly still.

"Strange," muttered Fred, with increasing awe. "If I was inclined to believe in ghosts, I might almost think—Hello, what was that?"

It was a slight movement in the hall below.

It sounded as though some one was endeavoring to open the door softly and noiselessly.

"There is some one in the house," thought the boy. "Who-

ever it is, while my back was turned, entered this room and stole the casket as sure as I am alive!"

With a bound, he leaped downstairs into the darkness without one particle of hesitation or fear.

He had to deal with something tangible now—not with ghosts, who move about unseen.

He reached the front door in an instant.

Too late!

The door was suddenly slammed in his face with a bang. Fred seized his cap from the hat-tree, flung open the door and rushed out of the house.

The rain was pouring in torrents, the gutters ran rivers of turbid water, while in the darkened sky above the lightning flashed, and the thunder crashed and roared.

He looked hastily up and down the street.

There was not a soul to be seen.

The house was located in the middle of the block. Unless the robber of the mahogany casket had vanished into thin air, where could he go?

Could the intruder have passed through the alley gate, and then to the rear of the house?

For such a move there might possibly have been sufficient time.

"He's gone into the alley to hide, I'll bet a dollar!" muttered Fred; "and if he has, I'll catch him sure."

Now, it requires downright courage for one man—to say nothing of a boy—to chase another through a dark alley unarmed, and knowing the man pursued to be a thief.

Locking the door behind him, he dashed open the alley gate, and ran to the yard in the rear of the house.

No one was to be seen.

He stood still and listened.

Presently a faint sound was heard, as though a cat had leaped from a fence.

"Speak, or I fire!" cried the boy, adopting a ruse of which he had somewhere read.

There was not a sound.

"Now, I'll swear some one dropped from that fence into one of the yards on the next street," he muttered, hurrying in the direction of the sound.

He climbed the fence and surveyed the yards of the houses which backed up against his own.

There was no one to be seen, nor was there the slightest sound, save the pattering of the raindrops and the distant barking of a dog.

In the house directly in the rear a faint light burned in the window of one of the upper rooms.

A sudden thought now seemed to flash through the boy's mind, and he now leaped back into the yard from the top of the fence.

"I'll bet it was old Stumpf after all," he muttered. "His house is right behind ours. It must have been he that sneaked into the closed room and snatched that box while my back was turned. I'll run around the block and ask Christine if he has just come in. I can depend upon her to tell the truth."

Ascending the stoop, he pulled the bell again and again.

A moment's delay ensued, and then the door was suddenly opened, and a young girl stood before him, her face expressing wonder and surprise.

Her name was Christine Rossmore. She was known as the niece and ward of the deformed German, Doctor Stumpf.

"Christine, where is Doctor Stumpf? Has he just come in from the back yard? Tell me—quick!"

"Come in from the back yard? Why, no, Fred. What can you mean? Doctor Stumpf came in half an hour ago, and went up to his room to bed."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"And did he not go out again?"

"No, I've been sitting here in the front room reading. I should have heard him if he had. But what do you mean by all this?"

In a few words, Fred told of the death of his mother, the purloining of the mahogany casket—in fact, related all that had occurred.

Between this boy and girl an affection had long since sprung up, which bore promise of developing into love in later years.

Who Christine Rossmore was, she herself did not exactly know. Since her earliest recollection she had lived alone with the hunchback German doctor, who called her his niece and his ward.

By her guardian, the girl was treated with anything but kindness, and her life had been far from happy for many years.

"It could not have been my uncle that stole the box," said Christine, as the boy completed his tale. "Of that I'm sure. He could not have gone out again without my knowing it, but to be certain, I'll creep upstairs and see if he is in his room."

When Fred had so unceremoniously dismissed him, he had concealed himself in one of the lower rooms, and, later, creeping stealthily upstairs, had watched his opportunity, slipped into the closed room while the boy's back was turned, seized the box, escaped through the alley gate and over the fence, exactly as the boy had suspected, entering his own house, unobserved, from the rear, and had, with catlike tread, regained his room.

"He is asleep in bed," replied Christine, when she had returned. "Bad as my uncle is, Fred, in this you are mistaken. He never took your box."

"If you say so, I must believe it, Christine," replied the youth in great perplexity. "But I must be off, as I shall go to Egypt, and I don't know when I shall see you again."

"Shall you go to Egypt at once?"

"At once, as soon as the funeral is over, and I can get ready to start. I wish you were going with me, Christine."

"I wish I was, Fred, but you know very well it cannot be."

"I suppose you will be thinking more of some other fellow than you do of me long before I get back?"

"Fred," she said calmly, taking his hands in her own, "when I love, I love—there are no half-way measures with me. I'm only a girl, and you are but a boy, but my life has made me older than my years. This much I promise you—I'll never marry until I see you again."

"Christine! you are a jewel!" cried the boy, flinging his arms about her. "I accept that promise, and I make you one in return. I'll never marry any girl until I have asked you to be my wife."

He impressed upon her lips a kiss, and then, as if alarmed at his own boldness, flung back the door, hastily left the house, and hurried off into the driving storm.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW FRED MORLEIGH BECAME A SHEIK.

Such were the occurrences of the memorable day upon which our young hero, Fred Morleigh, came to the determination to visit the far-off country, the Soudan.

Three months from that day, there stepped from the deck of one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers at Suakim, the port upon the Red Sea, from which the journey across the desert to Khartoum is usually begun, a boy fully equipped for travel in this wild land.

It was Fred Morleigh himself.

Disposing of his effects immediately after the funeral of his mother, he had put her dying commands into action at once.

But the mahogany casket had never been seen again.

As we know, Doctor Stumpf had obtained possession of the box, and he meant to keep it, too.

It was his intention to repair at once to Egypt himself, and obtain the buried treasure, the exact position of which the papers in the box could alone disclose.

This course he put in action a week or two after the boy left New York.

It was with a firm countenance and determined tread that the boy strode from the wharf where the steamer lay, through the streets of this little town.

At last he had reached Africa, and was now fairly on his way to the Soudan.

His knowledge of Arabic, thanks to his mother's careful training, was of immense use to him.

As he wandered about the bazaar of Suakim, he found no difficulty in conversing freely with every one he met, and to whom he chose to address himself.

The first thing was to reach Khartoum, and in order to accomplish that many a weary mile must be traversed across the desert plains which lay between the Red Sea and the city of the Upper Nile.

It was Fred's intention to join himself with some caravan of merchants or traders who were about to cross the desert.

In this he was successful, and the second day after his arrival at Suakim saw our young traveler mounted upon a camel, starting upon his journey in the train of the caravan, conducted by Aboo Hamet, merchant of Khartoum.

The whole country around Suakim and between the line of the coast of the Red Sea and the River Nile is infested with tribes of wandering Arabs, who, if they consider themselves of superior strength, do not hesitate to fall upon any luckless travelers who may chance to fall in their way, and plundering them without mercy, leave their carcasses a prey for the jackals upon the burning sand.

Therefore, travelers join themselves into caravans, or bands, and never venture beyond the cities or towns unless heavily armed.

When the highlands of Shendy were reached, the country became more wild and broken, and some traces of vegetation were seen.

But water was not to be found.

Now, this was just what those of the caravan needed. By some strange oversight, an insufficient supply had been laid in at the wells last passed, three days before.

"It matters not," said Aboo Hamet, sagely; "if we live until sundown, we will be at the wells of Wady Kajat, by the side of which is the grave of the Frankish doctor who perished in the fight with the Shammar long ago."

"The grave of a Frankish doctor!"

The words fell upon the ears of our young hero and caused his heart to sink within him.

Might it not be the grave of his father by which they were to halt?

He asked the name of the Frankish doctor, but it was in vain.

Aboo Hamet knew it—it was written on a board placed above the grave by his friends, but his tongue could pronounce no such heathen sounds—yet stay, it was something like the boy's own.

At last the leader announced that the wells of Wady Kajat were in sight.

They were reached at last. The camels, relieved of their burdens, crowded upon the sands, and Fred Morleigh, following the directions given him by Aboo Hamet, and separating himself from the remainder of the company, advanced toward a rocky hill covered with cacti and the prickly dragon-tree, situated at some distance from the wells, upon the summit of which lay this Frankish doctor's grave, who had been killed in a fight with the wild desert tribe of the Shammar, and whose name seemed to the worthy merchant of Khartoum to greatly resemble his own.

As Fred was pushing his way up the hill, and among the trees, he was suddenly brought to a halt by a most peculiar sound.

"Whiz-z-z-z! Whiz-z-z-z!"

He realized the meaning instantly.

It was a flying bullet, and had been preceded by the report of a gun.

There, before him, towering high among the scrubby trees, stood a tall and powerful Arab, with his ancient flint-lock gun even now raised for a second shot.

The boy stopped short, and raising his hand, uttered a warning cry, his eyes fixed upon some object before him, his rifle raised to his shoulder in deadly aim.

Behind the man who sought his life was an object more deadly still.

"Beware! A lion—a lion!" he cried, in the Arabic tongue.

Behind this man crouched a lion of enormous size, his eyes flashing fire, and his tail lashing the ground angrily, as he prepared for a deadly spring.

The warning came too late.

Even as the boy spoke—an enemy though this fierce son of the desert was to him, he would have saved the life from this unseen foe if it were in his power—the fierce beast, seldom found as far north as this, had leaped upon the man before him and had felled him to the earth.

"Crack—crack—crack!"

The lion lay dead at the feet of his prey, three rifle-balls, sent with unerring aim, buried in his heart.

It was the work of but an instant, but in that instant the Arab realized his danger and the manner of his escape.

With a wild cry, he sprang forward, and flinging himself at the feet of the boy, kissed his garments and his feet again and again.

"Allah be praised!" he said, in humble tones; "even as I sought your life, oh, boy! you have saved my own. I am

your slave from this time forth. Omat, the Sheik of the Shammar, is yours to command."

"The Shammar!" cried Fred, gazing at the man and ordering him to rise. "Then you can help me now, oh sheik. Show me the grave of the Frankish doctor slain by the men of your tribe."

"That I can do!" cried the man, springing among the bushes. "There it lies, oh boy. Its place is marked by yonder board, which, infidel though he was, and the enemy of our tribe, marks the resting-place of the dead, and that is something no Arab would disturb."

This was true.

Fierce, wild and barbarous, as are these desert Arabs, no people on earth pay greater reverence to the graves of the dead.

A small mound beneath a dragon-tree was to be seen, surmounted by a board.

Boy though he was, Fred Morleigh had already learned that, having once gained the favor of an Arab, he was wholly safe in his hands.

He therefore stooped and examined the inscription upon the board without a particle of fear.

His heart sunk within him as he read the words thereon, and he felt a faintness creep over him which he was powerless to resist.

"Here lies Dr. Fred Morleigh, killed by the Arabs, November, 1879."

The inscription was in English and perfectly plain.

His father was, then, dead! His mission was accomplished even before his work had begun.

"Was the dead man your friend, oh boy?" demanded the Arab that stood by his side.

"He was my father. They told me he was killed by the men of your tribe."

"He was, many years ago."

"Can you tell me any of the particulars—that is, how it came about?"

"I can. Come with me to my tents on the other side of the hill. You have saved the life of Omat the Shammar, and from this day forth are his friend."

Without an instant's hesitation, Fred decided to accept the offer thus freely made.

From the chief he learned that his father had been slain in a fight with a caravan which had encamped at the wells.

His knowledge of the chief's own tongue, his skill with the rifle, for which he had been noted even before leaving New York, together with his sense of gratitude, so won the heart of the sheik, who was childless, that he urged the boy to remain with him as his son.

After some deliberation this offer was accepted, Fred feeling that he had nothing either to lose or gain, and when the caravan again moved our young hero was left behind.

Now, all this happened several years before the opening of our story.

Meanwhile, Fred Morleigh grew to love this wild, free, desert life, and by his skill at horsemanship, his sure aim with the rifle, won the respect and admiration of the entire tribe.

Then came a time when Omat the Sheik was gathered to his fathers, and by universal voice of the tribe, his adopted son was chosen their leader in his stead.

Thus strangely do things come about, and thus it was, that at the time of the siege of Khartoum we find Fred Morleigh bearing the name of Melek the Shammar, and a New York boy sheik of an Arab tribe in the wild, lawless country of the Soudan.

CHAPTER XII.

HASSAN GOES TO THE RESCUE OF CHRISTINE.

We must now return to our boy hero and his friends where we left them.

They were standing by the side of their camels, in sight of the ruined walls of the Temple of Num.

In the distance, moving across the desert sands, Fred, as we shall call him henceforth, watches those mounted figures by the aid of Hassan's powerful glass.

The scarred slave of the Mahdi was evidently right.

One of the figures was a woman, and, moreover, a woman in European dress.

It could be no other than Christine.

Her companions were both in native costume. Doctor Stumpf, her guardian, therefore, must have taken some other course.

That the rascally German had put his purpose into execution and come to Egypt in search of the treasure described in the papers contained in the mahogany box which he had stolen, is plainly to be seen.

Had he succeeded?

That was something which Fred did not know.

Many times his thoughts had reverted to his beautiful young girl during his life in the desert, and he had intended, in the course of a year or two, to return to America and seek her out.

Of the treasure, he rarely thought.

He had no means of locating it, so what was the use?

His surprise on meeting Christine Rossmore before the convent at Khartoum can therefore be readily imagined.

It needed but one glance at her beautiful face, when his youthful love for her returned with double force.

But how had she been taken from the Temple of Num?

By what mysterious agency had she been stolen away within reach of his very hand?

That was a profound mystery; but what concerns us most at present is the manner of escape of our hero and his friends.

It was simple, and managed by Dan Hannigan, the Irish priest.

While the enemy had yet remained, the wily Irishman had kept them securely hidden in a cave at the edge of the oasis, from the mouth of which flowed a crystal spring.

This cave was known only to the priests of the Temple of Num.

As the shouts and yells ceased, and the tramping of many feet was heard dying away in the distance, they ventured cautiously out.

The temple lay in ruins before them, everything about it not of solid stone having been consumed.

The walls and rock-carved chambers, of course, remained.

In an underground stable, in the rear of the temple, the entrance to which had been fortunately overlooked by the assailants, two camels used by the priests in their journeys across the desert were found unharmed.

They were led out and conducted beneath the little grove of trees.

Dan now disappeared within the ruined temple, and presently returned, dressed in one full suit of European clothes, and carrying another over his arm.

"There! these are my own," he said, as he approached. "I have had the fortune to find them unharmed. I shall wear the dress of a Coptic priest no more, and if you want this other suit, young fellow, they are yours to command."

Thus urged, the boy had complied, by no means averse to donning trousers and jacket again.

As they stood beside their camels, and the shades of evening began to fall about them, Hassan had espied the moving figures in the distance, and then followed the recognition of Christine, as given in the preceding chapter.

"Speak, oh, Hassan!" exclaimed Fred, still using the high-flown metaphor of the Arabic language in addressing the slave. "Yonder goes the girl I have sworn to save. How shall I follow her with the slow-footed camel, when her enemies are mounted on horses, and fleet ones, too?"

"Boy, it is useless," replied the Mahdi's slave, quietly. "You can never hope to overtake her, and even if you did so, what could you hope to accomplish?"

"I would rescue her, if it cost my life!" cried Fred, with flashing eyes.

The man smiled, and regarded the youth with evident admiration.

"I was once just the same," he murmured, "but it was long ago."

Again he spoke in English, as when Fred had heard his cry in the burning hall.

Hassan would neither talk of himself nor his past.

"And where was that?" the boy now asked, in English.

The man started abruptly from a reverie into which he had fallen.

"No matter!" he said hastily. "The day may come when you may know who and what I am; but it is not now. You saved my life, young man, and rely upon it, you will find me ever grateful. Some day I may have it in my power to repay you. Until that day comes, know me only as Hassan, the Mahdi's slave."

As Fred was about to reply there went up a shout from Dan.

"An' what the mischief is this?" he exclaimed, running to the edge of the little grove and staring in the direction of the temple. "Is it an ape or a monkey, forbye, that I see a-riding horseback around the temple wall?"

All looked in the direction indicated.

A little, black, dried-up looking figure, no bigger than a boy of eight or ten could be seen approaching on horseback.

"It is Muley!" cried the Mahdi's slave. "It is my black dwarf of the Nyam-Nyam. By some means he has secured a horse; with its aid the girl, Christine, may yet be saved."

The dwarf approached, greeting his master with shouts of joy.

Uttering some words in an unknown tongue, Hassan seized the little fellow and lifted him to the ground.

In an instant he had sprung upon the horse himself, and grasped the rein.

He waved his hand and pressed spurs to his horse's flanks, and in another moment Hassan, the scar-faced slave of the Mahdi, the false Prophet of the Soudan, was dashing at full speed away across the sandy plains.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEATH OF GENERAL GORDON.

Now, Fred longed to question Dan more regarding the rumors of buried treasure beneath the temple, which they were about to leave, but he felt that it was in inauspicious time.

If this was the Temple of Horus, was it not the one so long sought by those of his own race?

Probably it was, but if he were to unearth the treasure, what could he do with it?

Clearly nothing.

Mounting his camel, therefore, and placing the dwarf before him, he led the way at a long and rapid trot across the desert, the ex-Copt following upon his own.

It was well on toward noon the next day when they came to a halt by the bank of the Blue Nile.

During the entire journey they had not encountered a single person.

Turning their camels adrift—it was all they could do—both Fred and Dan Hannigan followed the dwarf through the secret passage under the river, and a little later they stood within the high-walled garden of the mysterious house on the outskirts of Khartoum.

A death-like stillness pervaded the air; the garden was deserted. The house, which was large, and for the place, a very handsome one, was deserted.

"It looks as dismal as a jail," said Dan, "an' phwat are we to do? Go insoide an' remain in hoidin'? Sure, an' wot's to hinder us goin' out an' takin' a survey of the town. I've been so long cooped up in that blissid ould timple that a turn about town will do me good, so it will!"

"Better obey my master," said the dwarf. "He is wise and knows what is best. See, I have the key. Let us enter, and you shall want for nothing until he returns."

Scarcely had the words left the lips of the dwarf when the distant roar of cannon, mingled with the discharge of firearms, broke upon the air.

"Come, Dan!" cried our hero. "When there is fighting to do I can never remain cooped up here! Open the gate, Muley! We are off for the center of the town! Who can tell? Perhaps the brave Gordon may even now stand in need of aid from a friendly hand?"

Without waiting for assistance from the dwarf, Fred flung open the gate, which was fastened upon the inner side, and rushed out upon the ill-paved street, Dan Hannigan following.

Through one street after another they ran, until they had reached the public square.

It was even as Fred had imagined.

The men of the Mahdi, admitted to the city through treachery, were even now in possession of the doomed city of Khartoum.

A fearful massacre was evidently about to ensue. From these fanatical brutes what mercy was there to expect?

They rushed across the square through the maddened crowd, bullets raining about them on every side.

Scarce had they reached the steps of the Government House when a tall and manly form was seen to emerge from the portals and turn to descend.

It was General Gordon who now faced that maddened throng without the betrayal of one symptom of fear.

"Back—back, madmen!" he cried. "Fight for your lives, your country and your homes! Know ye what there is to fear at the hands of fiends like these?"

He waved his hand aloft, trying to inspire courage in the timid souls before him.

In vain.

General Gordon, the brave defender of Khartoum, had spoken his last words on earth.

Even as their sound died upon his lips a knife, wielded by the hand of one of his own, treacherous Egyptian guards, descended upon his back, and that bravest of all brave men fell dead upon the marble steps.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FALL OF KHARTOUM.

The hero was dead at last.

The busy brain and steady hand which had during so many months guided the fortunes of the doomed city of Khartoum were stilled at last.

The brave Gordon was no more.

"Away with him! Away with the infidel dog's remains!" they cried; "throw them to the curs in the street, cast them to the dunghill! Allah be praised! We are freed from him at last!"

Pushing Fred hastily aside, and without ceremony, they seized the body of the fallen hero and conveyed it into the Government House.

From that time forth it was never seen again.

What become of it, no one knows, and it is doubtful if the world will ever learn.

As for our young hero, he could not have followed even if he had been so inclined.

Hastening through the corridors of the building—no attention being paid to them by the frightened officials, who thought only of their own escape—they soon reached a small door leading into a rear street behind the Government House.

Two soldiers in native costume were on guard without.

A sudden thought flashed through the mind of the boy.

He called them in, and they, seeing his uniform, obeyed. Dan and Fred overpowered them and forced them to undress, and the two donned the suits of the guards, leaving them bound and gagged. They then sallied forth.

The sight which met their gaze was terrible.

The streets were filled with the fleeing populace, who, with their personal effects, were hurrying before the Mahdi's troops.

Although in sympathy with the false Prophet almost to a man, no mercy was shown them and few lives were spared.

The Egyptian troops that had seemed to guard the city were cut down to a man.

The Arabs soon gained possession of the citadel, or fortress, and a fearful massacre of the garrison followed, the scenes of slaughter rivalling the famous Sepoy mutinies in India in their atrocity and horror.

Fred Morleigh and Dan Hannigan now found themselves before the Roman Catholic convent where the boy sheik had first encountered Christine, which was now a smoking ruin, having been burned some hours before.

They were discussing the course they had best pursue.

Suddenly a platoon of mounted Arabs was seen running down the street.

At their head rode a man of unusually dark features and gigantic stature.

"Seize those fellows!" cried the leader of the platoon, in the Arabic tongue. "Unless I greatly mistake, they are the very men for whom we seek."

Scarce had the words escaped his lips when they were seized by a dozen hands.

"Ha! bold Melek the Shammar! defender of the Temple of Num, we meet again it seems!" exclaimed Abd-ur-rahman, as the boys waved their torches in the faces of the pris-

oners. "We heard of your presence in Khartoum, and that of the Coptic priest, and have been seeking you until now. Praise to Allah! you have been found!"

The platoon now wheeled suddenly about and rode rapidly in the direction by which they had come, Fred and Dan being forced to follow on foot, guarded securely by a dozen armed men.

They passed the bazaar, the public square and the Government House, taking, in fact, very much the same direction chosen by our hero on the night of his flight with Christine.

Suddenly Abd-ur-rahman was seen to suddenly come to a halt before a high brick wall.

Behind the wall a large building appeared, in which Fred at once recognized the house to which he had been conducted by Muley the dwarf that very morning.

A strange transformation had taken place in its appearance.

When the boy sheik and his companion had left it but a few hours before it had been tightly closed, and to all appearances deserted; now, it was brilliantly lighted and showed every sign of life.

A wide gate was thrown open by unseen hands, and Abd-ur-rahman, at the head of the mounted men, rode boldly in, followed by the guards who conducted the prisoners.

Before a flight of white marble steps they came to a halt.

Abd-ur-rahman leaped to his feet, his steel head-dress of many links jingling loudly as he did so.

"Follow me, Melek the Shammar!" he said, sternly, "and you, oh Copt, see that you keep close behind! Bare your heads, infidel dogs! Shake the shoes from your feet, for you are now about to enter the presence of the holy prophet of Allah upon earth, El Mahdi, the Saviour of the Soudan!"

CHAPTER XV.

DR. STUMPF MEETS AN UNTIMELY END.

We must now return once more to the underground vaults of the Temple of Num, and ascertain the fate of Christine.

Of her sudden and mysterious disappearance the reader is already informed.

From that passage—to all appearances one unbroken mass of solid stone—Christine had vanished in the darkness during the lapse of but one second of time.

Suddenly and noiselessly, and without an instant's warning, an arm was flung about her neck, and a heavy hand pressed a sponge, saturated with chloroform, or some similar drug, close against her nose and mouth.

In vain she essayed to struggle—that arm held her in a vise-like grip.

To cry out was an equal impossibility—the fatal drug had seized hold upon her brain, and Christine Rossmore fell back unconscious into the arms of a man.

With the quickness of thought, and without a particle of noise, she was drawn through a narrow opening in the solid stone wall, which closed automatically the instant her form had passed.

She was now in a second passage similar to the first, and lying unconscious in the arms of one of the white-robed priests of the temple.

Bearing the unconscious form of Christine in his arms, the man passed hastily along the passage, through a narrow door, and down a flight of broad stone steps.

Here he found himself in a small square chamber.

A damp and mouldy smell pervaded the place, which was evidently below the surface of the ground. It was illuminated by the light of a resinous torch, held aloft in the hand of a man.

He was old and hunchbacked, and was dressed in a long, black coat.

It would have required but one glance from the now closed eyes of the young girl whom the priest deposited on the ground at his feet, to identify him at once as the rascally German doctor—Stumpf—whose ward she was.

"Ah, most worthy Copt! You have succeeded, then," he said, bending over the girl and throwing upon her face the full glare of the torch.

He spoke in Arabic.

The reply was in the same tongue.

"I have, oh physician. I keep my promise. Here lies the girl at your mercy—deal with her as you will."

"I will deal with her without mercy if she longer refuses to bend to my will. We must and will discover the secret hiding-place of the great treasure beneath the temple, Ali, and what is more, we must discover it this very night."

He knelt beside the unconscious form of Christine.

Thrusting his hand into her bosom, he produced a minute box of brass.

"Ha, it is as I thought!" he exclaimed. "Many times have I sought this box in vain, but hoping to find opportunity to place it in the hands of that young renegade, the boy sheik, she has been less careful of its hiding now. Behold, good Ali, the secret of this temple is in our hands at last!"

Grinding the box into twenty pieces beneath his heel, a scrap of paper, yellow and time-worn, appeared.

He seized it eagerly, and held it up to the lighted torch.

It bore upon its face but a few faded words, written in a small, cramped hand, below and above which a portion of the paper had evidently been torn off.

The words were in English, and were these:

"Strike thrice upon the iron bolt imbedded in the stone. Three rings will appear. Behold them and beware. Raise——"

Here the written characters came to an abrupt end.

The rest of the paper had been torn off.

"This is not all," cried Doctor Stumpf, "but it is enough. Behold the bolt beneath our feet. Ali, strike, and the treasure is ours."

At the same instant the rush of many feet could be heard above their heads. Hundreds of persons seemed to be hastening through the apartments above.

"Listen!" whispered the priest. "The men of the Mahdi are sacking the temple. We must hasten. At any moment they may be here. Let us close this secret hiding-place, cover our tracks and return later on."

Exerting all his strength, he struck three powerful blows upon a small iron bolt set in the stone beneath his feet.

Slowly the great stone was seen to sink and move noiselessly to one side.

A space about six feet square was disclosed beneath, in which three iron rings could be distinctly seen imbedded in a second floor, some three feet below the first, and likewise of stone.

Both Doctor Stumpf and the priest leaped into the opening, the former holding the torch while the latter grasped the ring nearest his hand.

"Behold them and beware."

Was that not the way in which the torn scrap of paper read?

It was; but in the mind of the German physician the greed of gain overshadowed every other thought.

"Pull, Ali! pull!" he cried, waving his torch before him.

It reflected upon the pale face of the unconscious girl, it lit up the narrow vault with a yellow, fitful light.

Little did the man dream in this, the hour of his triumph, that by the light of the torch he was destined to enter the cold embrace of death.

Grasping the ring with both hands, the Coptic priest pulled with all his strength.

The stone which held it remained firmly fixed in its place.

Again he stooped and pulled, this time taking a firmer hold.

Horror of horrors!

What strange mechanism is this?

Instead of an upward motion, the great stone which held the ring imbedded has sunk beneath their feet, and with it both Doctor Stumpf and the treacherous Copt have disappeared into dark nothingness below.

One wild cry, and all is still.

One moment passes, then another, and still another; steps are heard descending the broad stone stairs, and twenty fierce, half-naked Arabs have entered that underground vault, and are even now bending over the form of Christine Rossmore, who lies unconscious at the very mouth of that horrid pit.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MAHDI YIELDS TO THE POWER OF GOLD.

We left our hero, the Boy Sheik of the Soudan, in a most trying and perilous position—face to face with the Mahdi himself.

By his side stood Dan Hannigan, the ex-priest of the Temple of Num.

"Now, then, good Abd-ur-rahman," said the Mahdi, looking up indolently as his dusky lieutenant approached, "who have you brought for judgment now?"

"Melek, the sheik of the treacherous Shammar, oh Prophet of heaven upon earth! The leader of that tribe who has persistently refused to acknowledge you as the Saviour of the Mohammedan race?"

"And his companion?"

"Abou-ben Mamed, a Coptic priest, of the Temple of Num."

"Ha, is it so? Then it is well. You did well to destroy the holy place of those infidel Copts, good Abd-ur-rahman, and this man having escaped, let him also be destroyed."

The face of the boy sheik was pale, his hands were tightly clenched, but he stood bravely facing the Mahdi, ready to encounter whatever fate might have in store for him.

"Speak, Melek the Shammar," said the false Prophet. "You are he who would have led the forces of the Mudir of Dongola to the assistance of Gordon Pasha, the English governor of Khartoum. Is it not so?"

"You have spoken, oh Mahdi," replied our hero, boldly; "what, then, have I to say?"

"They tell me, boy, that you are not of Shammar blood—that you are English, or from some of the other powerful Frankish tribes."

"They tell me truly, oh Mahdi! I am an American from the city of New York."

"I have heard of America, and have also heard much of you. That you are brave, a fine rider, a dead shot with the rifle; and that the Shammar adore you, I also know. No man of your race should ever rule over the followers of a tribe of Mohammed, our holy prophet. Melek the Shammar, for your rebellious attitude toward my sacred cause, this night you die—to-morrow your tribe must choose another leader, and one of their own faith and race."

The heart of Fred Morleigh sunk within him.

Here he was at the mercy of this man's will alone.

For a moment the Mahdi regarded him attentively; then, stamping his foot, two black slaves appeared.

"Bring hither the English maiden brought to my camp at the morning's dawn. I would make this daring youth understand that from my power none can escape."

An English maiden in the Mahdi's power?

Who could it be but Christine?

Even as he gazed, Christine Rossmore, conducted by two slaves, stood between the Mahdi and himself.

"Behold the girl you love, young man," continued the false Prophet, with a triumphant glitter in his eyes, "captured by my trustworthy warriors in the ruined Temple of Num, and now destined to the proud fate of becoming my slave and my wife. I have had a spy on all your movements since first the Shammar refused to join my banner and my cause. This is now my vengeance—death for you, the girl for me."

The boy sheik turned quickly.

Close behind him stood Hassan, the Mahdi's slave, his horribly scarred face looking more repulsive than ever in the uncertain light.

"Save her!" he cried, seizing both his hands. "Save Christine, Hassan, and I will fall down and worship you! No matter for us—we can die. Save her, and leave us to our fate!"

To this remark Hassan paid no attention whatever, but stepping quickly forward, prostrated himself at the Mahdi's feet.

"Ha! Hassan. So you have returned?" exclaimed the Mahdi, coldly, at the same time regarding the man with lowering brows. "For several days you have absented yourself from my tent and my business. What have you to say in defense of conduct like yours?"

The man raised himself to his feet and stood facing the speaker.

"I was engaged in your business, as I ever am, oh Mahdi, he replied, boldly, "until I have found matters of importance of my own."

"How say you, Hassan? Remember you are but my slave. If I have ever seen fit to treat you as an equal, as a friend, that is my affair; but beware how you seek to take advantage of my good will. No man knows better than you do the power I possess. Speak! Why did you seek to hide Melek the Shammar and the Christian girl in the Temple of Num?"

"Listen then, oh Mahdi," replied the slave, drawing himself up to his full height. "I am of the same nation as this

boy and girl—I am an American, from the city of New York. The thirst for gold brought me to the Soudan. I came to this land, seeking for an enormous treasure, buried by my grandfather and a Coptic priest beneath the Temple of Horus, now known as the Temple of Num."

Could Hassan have seen the face of the boy sheik then, he would have observed that there passed over it a remarkable change.

Our hero also saw the change that overspread the face of the girl he loved, and he listened with breathless interest to the words of Hassan, who now continued to speak.

"This treasure exists beneath that temple," continued the slave, "and its existence has long been fatal to me and mine. My grandfather lost his life in the endeavor to obtain it; my father did the same, and I, in the same endeavor, met with a fate worse than death."

"And you will place it in my hands?" exclaimed the Mahdi, in great excitement. "Do this, good Hassan, and I swear to grant you whatever you may ask. With this treasure I can carry on my holy war until every English dog is driven from the Soudan."

"I will place it in your hands, oh Mahdi, if you will but grant me one request."

"And that is——"

"The possession of this maiden who stands by your side, the life of the Melek of the Shammar, who is none other than my only son!"

With a sudden cry of joy, Fred Morleigh sprung forward. Father and son were locked in each other's arms.

For an instant the Mahdi gazed upon the scene with a countenance by no means unmoved.

"Hassan," he said, slowly, "to you I owe my life. The Mahdi never forgets. He is not ungrateful—your action in trying to shield this youth is now explained. You have my promise, and I hold you to yours. Lead my followers to the Temple of Num, deliver to me this vast treasure, and the lives of those prisoners are in your hands, to deal with as you will."

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

Morning dawned, as morning ever dawns in the rainless valley of the Nile—hot, and with a cloudless sky.

Scarce had the sun arisen above the line of the desert plain than a troop of horsemen, led by the giant Arab Abd-ur-rahman, might have been seen wending their way from the eastern shore of the blue Nile, opposite the fallen city of Khartoum, toward the now ruined Temple of Num.

In their midst, closely guarded, rode Fred Morleigh, Christine, and he whom we have known as Hassan, the Mahdi's slave, during the progress of this tale, but now known to us as none other than Doctor Morleigh, our hero's father, to learn whose fate Fred had left New York and came to the Soudan.

By his side rode a little black dwarf, not over four feet high.

It is Muley, the pigmy from the country of Nyam-Nyam.

In his estimate of the character of the Mahdi, Doctor Morleigh was entirely correct.

During his tours through the country he lost no opportunity to search for the Temple of Horus, where lay buried the treasure so fatal to his race, and which he had come out to this wild land to seek.

The papers handed down by his family relating to the treasure—duplicates of which he had left behind him in the mahogany casket in the closed room for the benefit of his son, and which had been stolen by the treacherous German, Doctor Stumpf—he had, upon close-examination, found to be incomplete.

They told of the finding of the treasure, of its burial in the secret vaults of the temple; they even partially described the very vault under which it lay hidden, but how to reach it they did not tell.

One paper was missing.

Without it the treasure might have been forever sought in vain.

Doctor Morleigh was aware of this fact when he made his promise to the Mahdi, saving thereby the life of his only son.

Once recognizing his son, Doctor Morleigh had formed an

immediately intention of escaping from the country, and with Fred joining the English army further to the north.

The disappearance of Christine had disarranged his plans, and he had pursued her, only to see her conveyed to Khartoum by the men of the Mahdi and had himself arrived at that city just in time to witness its fall, and to learn of the peril of his child.

The passage of the desert was quickly made, and the blazing sun had scarcely reached the meridian when the little party found themselves once more at the ruins of the Temple of Num.

Abd-ur-rahman commanded a halt before the fallen gate.

"We are at the temple, oh, Hassan!" cried the gigantic chief, leaping to the ground. "Lead us to this buried treasure, and the life of yourself as well as those of these prisoners, is in your hands. If you have lied, you must prepare to die!"

These words were heard by Doctor Morleigh alone, the others having been detained at some distance in the rear.

Christine would have given worlds to have communicated but one word to the man who, in the company of Abd-ur-rahman now vanished within the temple gate; but it was impossible. No communication between the prisoners was allowed.

An hour elapsed—all waiting patiently for Doctor Morleigh's return.

At last he appeared, pale and nerveless, bound, and in the custody of the Arab chief.

"The prisoners die!" cried Abd-ur-rahman, waving his hands to his men. "This treacherous slave has lied. The treasure exists in his imagination alone. March them all ten feet in advance and shoot them down like dogs."

Scarce had the words fell from the lips of Abd-ur-rahman than a wild shout burst upon the air.

It was followed by another and another, and from the rear of the temple, dashing across the plain, a hundred Arab horsemen, splendidly mounted, burst upon the scene.

"Courage, oh, Melek! Courage, oh, sheik," went forth from a dozen throats.

It was the tribe of Shammar in full war array, and at their head rode the boy, Artime, who had served to guide them to the scene of his master's greatest need.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Twenty of the men of the Mahdi lie dead upon the ground.

Abd-ur-rahman was the first to fall and a moment later Doctor Morleigh, Christine, and Dan Hannigan, the Irish priest, all stood as free as air before the boy sheik at the head of his tribe.

Their enemies were completely overpowered.

Such as had survived the fight had precipitately fled across the desert.

Mutual explanations followed, when it was found that the arrival of the Shammar had been as accidental as it had been opportune.

Led by Artime, who had escaped from the burning temple, they returned to search for the body of their beloved young leader, supposing it to lie beneath the ruins—that was all.

That their arrival was most timely need not be told.

It was now Christine's turn to speak.

In a few words she told of the fate of her treacherous guardian, Doctor Stumpf, and of the discovery he had made in the underground vault.

Fred, his father, and Dan Hannigan, together with three of the Shammar, immediately accompanied her to the scene of the German's death.

There yawned the treacherous pit, as black as before, the two remaining rings being unmoved by its mouth.

Christine described the paper taken from her by the old doctor.

This was the way it read:

"Strike thrice upon the bolt imbedded in the sone. Three rings will appear. Behold and beware. Raise——"

Here, it will be remembered, the paper had been torn off.

"It is all a mystery," exclaimed Doctor Morleigh, "and a mystery I cannot solve. How this paper came to be in your possession, young lady; how——"

"But faith, an' I can solve it all!" cried Dan Hannigan, coming forward—he had been strangely quiet until now—"an' what's more, by the same token, it's mesilf that has the rist of that paper an' here it is."

As he spoke, the Irishman thrust into the hands of Doctor Morleigh a yellow, time-worn scrap of paper, which he now

produced from a small leather case, concealed about his clothes.

Holding it to the light of the torch carried by one of the Arabs, he read as follows:

"—the middle ring—a flight of steps will appear. Follow them and find the treasure of Horus. To touch the other rings is death."

It was the combination of the torn paper.

The location of the treasure was at last explained.

Strong hands seized the ring and tore the great stone which held it from its rocky bed.

A flight of steps stood plainly revealed.

At the foot of these steps was a door, also of stone.

It was unfastened, and opened at the pressure of the hand.

Waving the torch within the apartment thus revealed, a strange sight met their gaze.

In the form of candlesticks, censers, and vessels of strange device and form it filled the vault from end to end, a glittering, shining mass, reflecting back, by the light of the flaring torch, its yellow light—that light which moves the world—the all-powerful light of gold.

Two weeks later there arrived at Suakim a singular company.

They were a man of more than middle age, a young man of twenty-one or twenty-two, a young and a beautiful girl of about the same age, and a stout, robust Irishman with a fiery-red head and beard.

The face of the man was most horribly scarred, and that scar, extending from forehead to chin, from ear to ear, was in the form of a perfect cross.

It was Doctor Morleigh, formerly the Mahdi's slave, and his companions were Fred, his son, Christine, soon to become our hero's wife, and Dan Hannigan, the ex-Coptic priest.

Accompanying them were Muley, the dwarf, and Artime, the Arab boy of the Shammar tribe.

Upon twenty camels, laden with the golden vessels from the Temple of Num, securely placed in hampers, our little party, had, under the powerful escort of the Shammar, succeeded in reaching the coast in safety.

Liberal rewardings their faithful allies, who, heartbroken, watched the final departure of their young sheik, as the great steamer moved slowly from its wharf out upon the bosom of the far-famed Red Sea, our friends set sail for England, and in due time reached in safety their old home in New York, bringing with them a fortune of princely magnificence, the result of the sale of the golden treasure, found beneath the Temple of Num.

Before taking leave of them, one thing remains to be explained.

This is the mysterious division of the missing paper between Christine and Dan.

Christine—as it proved upon our hero questioning the beautiful girl—was herself of the Morleigh race, her mother being none other than the sister of Doctor Morleigh, of whom he had lost sight years before.

Thus, Christine and Fred were cousins, and from her mother the brass box had been received.

It seemed that the elder Mrs. Morleigh, desiring that her son should never follow his father's fate, had taken from the papers left by her husband the vital one of all, and this she had given her daughter, inclosed in the brass casket, hoping that when it should be found missing, as it described the exact location of the treasure, no further search for it might be made. As she had sworn not to destroy the papers, this plan the good woman deemed wisest to pursue.

Now, it happened that Dan Hannigan, then a boy, was a servant in the Morleigh family, and having acquired a bad habit of listening at doors, and poking and prying generally, had one day come upon the papers (this was before they were divided), and had carefully read them through.

Scarce had he completed them when he heard some one entering the room, and in his endeavor to restore them to the casket in which they lay, the one describing the location of the treasure tore in two pieces in his hands.

One half fell into the casket, the other half found its way to Dan's pocket, and it was the torn paper that passed into the possession of Christine.

After many adventures, Dan was seized with a desire to make use of the knowledge thus gained.

It was this that took him to the Soudan and made him enter the Coptic priesthood and become an inmate of the cloister of Num.

His information was too insufficient, however, to enable him to successfully locate the treasure, and it is doubtful if any other way than the bringing together of the torn paper—the contents of the portion which went down into the pit in the hand of Doctor Stumpf being known to Christine by heart—this vast wealth, so long successfully hidden, would ever have been discovered at all.

But fate had willed that it once more should see the light of day, and after having been buried for centuries, be again of some use in the world.



In its final division among the Morleigh family, the reader can rest assured that Dan Hannigan came in for his full share.

How our hero enjoyed his wealth, and his subsequent fate, and that of his fair young wife, are things of the future, not of the past.

That the lot of our friends will prove a bright one, with boundless wealth to command, need hardly be said; and we feel that we are only speaking the truth when we say that we are well assured that it is the wish of our readers that the sun of the future may shine as brightly upon that poor, scarred face of Doctor Morleigh—once the Mahdi's slave—as we know it is bound to do upon the bright face of our youthful hero—once Melek, the Sheik of the Shammar, the New York Boy in the Soudan.

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HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

WHAT HAVE YOU GIVEN UP?

Have you given up your job and let your business future take care of itself?

Have you said good-by to your family and friends and all you hold dear?

Have you begun an entirely new career that may end, if you live, with health impaired, an arm off, a leg gone, an eye out?

Have you given up your business future and said good-by and taken a chance on coming back alive and well, and done it all with a cheerful heart and with a grim determination to do all you possibly can for your country?

And do you only at times—in the evenings, perhaps, when the light in the sky slowly fades away—feel so homesick and so lonesome that you are fearful you will not have the courage to do your part after all?

You have not done these things? Ah, I see, you are not one of our Army or Navy boys; you are a stay-at-home person.

Well, there have to be twenty or more stay-at-home persons for everyone who goes, and so certainly no disgrace attaches to being one if you fully appreciate what those boys who do go have to give up and if you support them to the limit of your ability.

National War Savings Day was June 28. That day gave you the opportunity of showing in a practical way that you do appreciate what it means to the boys who go. Did you pledge yourself on or before that day to save to the utmost of your ability and to buy War Savings Stamps that there may be more money, labor, and materials to back up those who fight and die for you?

LEST WE FORGET!

During the Third Liberty Loan campaign there appeared in a New York paper the following advertisement:

LEST WE FORGET.

He who can forget the little ones that lie mangled fifty fathoms deep under the shattered hulk of the Lusitania; who has no reverence for the dead and their devotion, no prayer for the dying and their anguish, no pity for the bereaved and the broken; whose blood is not quickened by our perils, whose heart is not softened by our pains; who reads unmoved of blasted homes and wasted countrysides, of desolated cities, and desecrated shrines, of heroic

Belgium, overrun but not conquered; of epic France and the noble dead that lie buried there—the great dead that fought and the innocent dead that merely wept and waited. He who can forget these things, or be indifferent to the sacrifices and the sorrows, the bereavements, and the burdens of Freedom's Gethsemanes—that man is a Hun at heart, for the crimes that none but a Hun can commit, none but a Hun can forget!

After a reading of this do you not feel more desirous than ever of saving to the utmost of your capacity and of buying War Savings Stamps?

PARAGRAPHS AND SLOGANS.

If you save to the utmost of your capacity and buy W. S. S. and Liberty Bonds to the limit of your financial resources you will be as genuinely patriotic as anyone. But do not forget that this means the limit of your financial resources—the limit reached after downright, hard saving—saving that represents sacrifice.

Should we not consider it a privilege to save to help our boys?

J. Leonard Replogle, a foremost man in the country's steel industry, and now Director of Steel Supply of the War Industries Board, says: "This is a crisis, and commercialism must be absolutely sidetracked. There is just one thing that we have to do—win the war!"

When one of our soldier or sailor boys makes the supreme sacrifice we say he died doing his duty. When one of us over here buys an interest-bearing Government security we want to be called a patriot. Let's buy War Savings Stamps to help our country and not to be glorified.

Too much importance has been given to Thrift Stamps. They are all right in their place. But do not make the mistake of thinking you have done your duty when you have bought a Thrift Stamp when you should have bought a \$5 W. S. S. There is no patriotism in trying to deceive yourself and your Government.

George M. Reynolds, president of the Continental and Commercial National Bank, of Chicago, says: "If we get to be a Nation of wise savers, we shall also be a Nation with a more certain business future."

Are you grateful that 2,000,000 of our boys, enlisted in our Army and Navy, are giving us security at home? If you are, turn your gratitude into War Savings Stamps.

CURRENT NEWS

BIG TUNA CANNERY.

Half a million dollars is to be expended in the construction of a large tuna cannery on the island of Maui, in the Hawaiian group, states The Canner. The waters around the islands swarm with fish of every description, among which the tuna is predominant and attains an enormous size. The operation of this plant will be a valuable addition to the food supply of the United States and may lead to the establishment of an important fishing industry in island territory.

GERMAN BOOKS ARE CREMATED AT "FUNERAL."

A public funeral service over the German text books in use in the public school in New Philadelphia, Pa, and which were condemned by the school authorities, was held recently.

The books were placed in a hearse, being taken from the high school building to the public square, where they were "cremated," after which the funeral oration was pronounced by Judge Michael V. Ream. The books were placed in an improvised coffin.

At a special meeting of the Board of Education the German language was thrown out of the schools here.

A MISPRINTED BANKNOTE.

Very few mistakes escape the vigilance of the United States in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. One notable exception, however, was a banknote with a \$50 value on one side and a \$100 value on the other.

The note was discovered by a clerk in a Western hotel, who, in making up his accounts for the day, found it impossible to get them to balance. In counting the bills which he had on hand from left to right, laying them face down as he did so, his accounts balanced exactly, but when he reversed the process and counted from right to left, laying the bills down on the other side, he was \$50 short. After vainly counting over and over, in despair, he called in the manager, who had no better success. At last they examined each bill carefully on both sides, and the cause of the trouble was discovered.

It was found on communicating with Washington that record was held there of the bill and the department was anxious to recall it. With another bill it had been printed for a bank in Kansas, and the mistake had been made in some way by a printer who had turned the sheet upside down in printing the reverse side. The first plate bore the obverse of a \$50 bill at the top and of a \$100 bill at the bottom, while the other plate held the reverse of

both notes. By turning the sheet around for the reverse printing the \$50 impression had been made on the back of the \$100 bill and the \$100 impression on the back of the \$50 bill.

FREAK INVENTIONS.

There is an inventor who is in a class by himself. He is the "perpetual motion crank."

At frequent intervals he turns up at the Patent Office in Washington with a new idea on the subject. Do the examiners turn him down? Not at all, says the Public Ledger. They simply say that the desired patent will be granted as soon as a model is offered that will really work.

The inventor has no reason to consider that his contrivance is discredited by this stated condition. The same thing was said until recently to the makers of flying machines, which were officially regarded much in the same light as contrivances for perpetual motion.

By accident a perpetual motion machine did get through the Patent Office a while ago. The examiners thought it was merely a new kind of summer resort railway, which, by a trolley arrangement, ran down one inclined plant and up another. But it violated the physical law that interferes with a man's liberty to lift himself by his own bootstraps.

A favorite type of perpetual motion machine involves the use of a pair of springs, one of which, while running down, winds up the other. If this could operate satisfactorily, a clock might be constructed that would go on forever without winding.

Every once in a while, when an examiner is sleepy or absent-minded, an invention is passed and patented that is a sheer absurdity. Patent Office folk, like most others, are human.

Thus, a while ago, a patent was granted for a corncob. It was supposed to be covered with corundum paste, for polishing dental plates, but, essentially speaking, the patent was for the corncob. Now nature surely invented that.

More remarkable yet, perhaps, was an ingenious scheme for punching pinholes in eggs. The inventor's idea was that by this means the gas generated in stored eggs could be allowed to escape, thus preventing them from exploding when boiled.

Patent No. 253,937 is for a "tempering solution to make iron hard." It consists of jimson weed, one ounce; apple juice, one ounce; turnip juice, two ounces, and one gallon of water.

Could anything be more absurd? Yet it got through. And the same is true of a process for chopping beef and potatoes into small pieces and cooking them together. You and I would call that plain hash, but a patent was granted for it just the same.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

DETACHABLE RUBBER HEELS.

An inventor has designed a rubber heel which can be attached or detached from the shoe without the aid of any special tools. This renders it possible to exchange the heel from one shoe for that of the other shoe, thus avoiding the uneven wear we are accustomed to see on fixed rubber heels.

A lock plate is embedded in the rubber heel and this is engaged by a retaining member fixed in the permanent portion of the heel, which is fastened to the shoe.

Another advantage is that the heels of one pair of shoes can be exchanged for those of another pair in the shortest possible time.

STABLE STANCHION KILLED AN OSTRICH.

As a result of having attempted to digest a stable stanchion three inches long, an inch wide and half an inch thick, Maine's only living ostrich at one time is now extinct. A postmortem also disclosed that a habit of digging out and eating the putty from the windows of his home at the George E. Macomber Farm in Augusta, Me., had not been conducive to longevity. Other delicacies which were revealed by this examination as part of the ostrich's diet were over a quart of gravel and various odds and ends of things that had been missing about the place, including the stanchion iron.

This ostrich was born in California and his final resting place will be in the Maine State Museum at the Capitol here. The skin is to be mounted and given to the State by Mr. Macomber. The creature was shipped east by express, being a gift to Mr. Macomber from his son-in-law, R. H. Bodwell, of this city. There was something of a joke to the gift, for the express bill came with it. Mr. Macomber accepted both ostrich and expenses of transit and the animal became one of the "sights" of the city, many visitors going to the Macomber estate to see the curiosity.

FIRST TANKS BUILT UNDER GUISE OF SNOW PLOUGHS.

When the armored tank was being prepared by Great Britain as a surprise to the Germans, even the workmen were kept in ignorance of its purpose. In the first stages the men were made to believe the tanks were to be used for watering troops in Egypt.

Later, when it became necessary to cut holes in the sides for guns, a new story had to be invented. It was that the tanks were snow ploughs to be used in Russia. Each tank was stencilled with a Petrograd address to aid in the deception. In the final

days of construction 700 sentries in three cordons were thrown around the field in which stood the tanks.

These facts were told by Major Gen. E. D. Swinton of the British Army at a performance in aid of the United States Tank Corps at the Astor Theatre, New York, recently. It was the first time the entire story of the invention and manufacture of the new war machine had been told. Although the tank was a British invention, Gen. Swinton gives America indirect credit for it, saying it was our farm tractors that first suggested the idea.

DISHWASHER BUYS BONDS.

While a team captain in the recent Liberty Loan campaign was canvassing a company at Camp Gordon he paused to interview a private who was washing dishes in the kitchen.

"You ought to be able to handle a \$50 bond at least," he insisted. "The commander will arrange to hold small payments out of your pay and you'll have a bit of a nest-egg when you get back from France. How about taking your subscription?"

"I'd rather draw all my pay, thank you," he said. "I may need it. But you may put me down for bonds to that amount," he added, handing a check to the captain.

The check was for \$10,000. The private was W. J. Etherington of Pennsylvania, who was washing dishes in the interest of one of the big coal companies. He subscribed \$50,000 to each of the former bond issues and had taken an equal amount in the third issue through his home bank.

COMBINATION TRUNK AND BATH TUB.

A likely sort of emergency bath tub is described in Popular Mechanics:

By fitting a heavy reinforced till into his trunk and lining it with impregnated canoe canvas, a man whose work keeps him travelling about with a construction crew during the summer, has provided himself and his family with the means of having a bath each day. The till and its fastenings were strengthened to hold the combined weight of the user and the water with which it is filled. It was then covered with canoe canvas, which was tacked in place with copper tacks and the seams covered with white lead. The canvas was waterproofed with two coats of white lead. The ends of the canvas are left of sufficient length to fold over the edges of the trunk. This avoids the possibility of water being splashed over and into the trunk during the process of bathing. The till is sixteen inches deep, but need not be filled to a depth of more than four inches for a satisfactory bath.

SENT ON THE ROAD

—OR—

A SMART BOY IN BUSINESS

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A serial story)

CHAPTER XII (Continued).

He hurried to the Union Depot, and took breakfast there, leaving on the Denver express over the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe road.

It is a long run from Kansas City to Denver.

There were not many passengers on the Pullman car.

Among them was a very stout young man with a pleasant face, and as the day wore on Walter fell into conversation with him in the smoking compartment.

The young man began it, and after some talk came the usual question of the road:

"What's your line?"

Walter laughed.

"Are you sure I am a drummer?" he asked.

"That's the way I size you up. Am I right?"

"Sure. I feel complimented, seeing that this is my maiden trip."

"Is that so? Shouldn't have thought it, but some fellows take to traveling as naturally as a duck does to water. Here's my card."

The young man was named Jack Floyd, it appeared.

He was traveling for the manufacturing jewelry firm of Hummell & Towns, of Providence, R. I.

Walter gave up his card, and talked building blocks for a few minutes.

"I shouldn't care for that sort of business," declared Floyd. "I'd a good sight rather sell out and out than to be dodging about between agents, architects, and builders."

"It is bothersome," replied Walter, "but you get used to it, and I don't find it any harder to sell blocks on the road than I did in New York."

As the day wore on the young men grew quite chummy.

Nightfall found them riding over the dreary Kansas plains.

Walter thought it was a horrible country, but Jack informed him that it would not be safe to say that to a Kansan, and he better keep his mouth shut.

At nine o'clock they turned in, Walter's berth being a lower, directly opposite to Jack Floyd's.

He was soon asleep, and probably would have put the night through but for a little mix-up about midnight.

It began with a fearful crash, and Walter rolled out of his bunk to find himself on top of Jack Floyd.

"What in thunder is the matter!" roared the drummer.

Women were screaming, men tumbled out of their bunks.

The porter, with a face almost white with fear, rushed through the car.

And still the train was moving.

Behind them were horrible sounds, crunching, grinding, smashing!

"It's a rear-end collision!" gasped Floyd, getting on his feet. "I must look out for my grips. I've got twenty thousand dollars' worth of stuff in them."

Walter thought that he would rather have his own line, bothersome as it was, than to carry such a responsibility as that around with him every day.

He expected nothing but to see a locomotive come ploughing its way into the Pullman.

Fortunately, it did not get that far.

The train stopped, and the young men, hurrying on their clothes, rushed out.

A special had plunged into the express.

The engine had ploughed them to kindling wood.

The Pullman had just escaped.

"We must jump in and help save life!" cried Walter.

"Can't do it," replied Jack. "A jewelry drummer is tied to his grips. I'm a dead one if I lose 'em. No more Providence, R. I., for me in that case, boy."

Doubtless he was right from his standpoint, but Walter did not hold back.

They were way out on the plains, with not a house in sight.

Running back into the Pullman, Walter threw his grip into the berth, and returned to the scene of action.

Here he with several others worked with a will.

No need to describe the distressing scene in detail.

Enough to say that Walter personally rescued eight passengers, three men, four women, and one little girl.

Many were taken out dead, and a number were terribly wounded.

The express engine ran on ahead to Abilene, and after a while returned with two doctors and railroad men.

By dawn the wounded had been removed to that town, and Walter, having done all he could, joined Jack Floyd in the Pullman.

They were still discussing the terrible affair when the remains of the train started.

It was not until just before they pulled into Abilene that Walter thought of his grip, and he went back to see if it was all right, and found it so, as he supposed.

In due time they reached Denver, and with Jack Floyd, Walter started to look up a hotel.

There was a convention on in Denver that week. Every hotel was packed to the doors.

Walter and his new companion were very glad to get a room together at the old Windsor on Larimer street.

(To be continued.)

FROM ALL POINTS

ON PANTHO'S MULE.

Francisco Villa's famous milk white mule is to be seen every time L. C. Able, a rancher near Fort Hancock, Texas, comes to town for fresh supplies of coffee, beans and bacon. The mule was ridden in the field in Mexico by Villa when his wounded leg was too sore for him to ride a horse. He said this particular mule had a gait like a rocking horse, and it was for this reason he rode it except when directing a battle. The mule was brought across from Mexico by a Villa agent and later sold to Mr. Able by a rancher. His name is Pancho Villa, Pancho being the diminutive form of Francisco in Mexico.

GERMANS WRECK CHURCH.

German sympathizers are believed by Federal authorities to have been responsible for desecration of the Hammet Place Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, because of attacks on Germany launched from the pulpit recently by the pastor, the Rev. W. G. Johnston.

When worshippers came to the church they found the interior in ruins. Furnishings had been torn from the walls, an American flag and a service flag torn to shreds, pulpit and pews hacked with axes, a piano destroyed and a Bible and numerous hymn-books mutilated beyond repair.

INVENTS FRAME BENDING DEVICE.

A mechanical engineer, Frederick Meron, New York City, has developed an apparatus for heating and bending frames for wooden ships, according to the Pusey & Jones Shipbuilder. The wood timbers are first saturated by means of steam, preparatory to subjecting the timbers to pressure for bending them to the necessary shape. This new method obtains a uniform saturation which was not obtained under the old plan.

Mr. Meron's invention provides for continuous saturation of the timbers with low pressure or exhaust steam, so that all sides of each piece are treated uniformly. This inventor also has devised apparatus for the shaping of the wood after it is steam heated, so that the parts may be turned out in quantity.

SOLDIER'S PHOTO IN BOTTLE AT SEA REACHES FRIEND

When J. Albright, of West End avenue, Newark, N. J., left an Atlantic port, aboard a transport, he remembered a photograph of himself that was in his old kit bag but ought to have been in the keeping of his friends.

The ship was already in motion, and it was too late, therefore, to mail the picture. The presence of several empty sodawater bottles on board gave the soldier an idea, which has resulted in the photo-

graph reaching his friends through David Rothbach, of No. 112 Peshin avenue, Newark.

Albright took the picture and wrote on the back of it a request that the finder communicate with Rothbach. He then forced it into a bottle, which was sealed and dropped into the ocean.

When Arthur Bruggeman, a Bay Shore fisherman, made his last trip out to his mackerel pounds, about five miles off Fire Island, a few days ago, he saw Albright's bottle floating on the surface of the ocean and was attracted by the white paper within.

Bruggeman picked it up and brought it ashore. Fred Nolte, a friend of the fisherman, communicated with Rothbach.

A QUESTION AND AN ANSWER.

Many of us in the great army of stay-at-homes chafe over our inaction during this war time and ask "How can I help?" The editor of the Brooklyn Eagle gives this answer:

"Those who regard the sale of War Savings Stamps as a side enterprise or as something that appeals mainly to children totally miss the purpose behind a plan which is one of the best thus far evolved for war purposes. In the last analysis the selling of these stamps is the fitting of the whole Nation to sustain the burden of the war. It is the application to war finance of the principle of universal service. It aims to enlist all of the American people in direct support of that gallant minority among them who have answered the call to arms and prepared themselves for the firing line.

"The War Savings Stamps supply the final and conclusive question: 'How can we all help?'"

SCORES OF VESSELS DUE TO HIT WATER JULY 4.

Scores of ships of both wood and steel construction are to be launched in American yards on July 4. In response to Chairman Hurley's suggestion that the nation's birthday anniversary be made "Ship Launching Day," virtually every shipyard in the country is speeding up work in an effort to launch vessels on time.

Already it is reported that sixteen vessels will be ready for launching July 4 in yards on the Pacific Coast. The plants on the Great Lakes are expecting to have at least a dozen ships ready to go into the water. No figures are obtainable as yet on the Atlantic Coast yards, but it is estimated that a little extra effort would enable the Eastern plants to keep pace with the Pacific Coast yards.

Thus it appears almost certain that between forty and fifty vessels will go overboard on the great National holiday. It will be a unique method of celebration and a ceremony peculiarly appropriate to the occasion.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JULY 17, 1918.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

A pet trick that the German soldiers employ is to leave a watch hanging on the wall of their abandoned trenches. Said watch connects by electric wires with a high explosive bomb, which explodes when the watch is removed from the wall.

Joseph McKinley Walker, Company C, Eighteenth Infantry, First Battalion, Camp Grant, en route with colored troops East, while dreaming of the Huns, jumped from his berth, which was No. 13, in a nightmare and struck an iron signal pole with his head, breaking the pole. He was taken to the hospital, apparently dying. The other day he appeared at the depot and begged the agent to get him East so he could rejoin his comrades who, he said, were bad actors and liable to catch the Kaiser before he could get there if he didn't hurry.

On April 20 last a stranger brought a cow to York, Pa., and tried to sell her at nine cents a pound, when the market price was fourteen cents. The thing looked suspicious. Then the stranger became alarmed, apparently, and took the cow to a stable near the city and left her there until he would return for her. He did not return, and the cow was turned over to the police and kept at a city livery stable while an investigation was conducted. The cow has been identified as the property of J. F. Talbott of Lutherville, Md., and was one of a herd of high-bred cattle owned by Mr. Talbott. He sent a man for the cow.

The Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute at De Bilt, near Utrecht, with branches elsewhere in Holland, until 1916 used for wind observations in the upper air small caoutchouc balloons which were obtained from France. Then information came from Paris that the manufacturer of these balloons could furnish no more. The institute was thus reduced to the choice of ceasing the upper-air wind observations or having the balloons made in Holland. Ex-

periments began at once and continued more than a year, and now it is announced that they have been entirely successful. It is stated that the small and light rubber bags made in an automobile garage at Utrecht can, after undergoing a certain chemical process, be easily inflated into large balloons which are plainly visible in the air. Further, it is claimed, observations with these balloons can be made at a greater height than was ever possible with the imported ones. On favorable days, observations have been made at a height as great as fifteen kilometers (9.32 miles). As these balloons are pure white and transparent as glass, they are said to form a peculiarly favorable image in the telescope—different from the former imported balloons, which had a golden tint that detracted from long-distance visibility through the telescope.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

He—There goes a man who hasn't a friend in the world. She—Poor fellow! How did he lose his money?

A clergyman was recently telling a marvelous story, when his little girl said: "Now, pa, is that really true, or is it just preaching?"

Mr. Crimsonbeck—Here's a narticle which says the swan outlives any other bird, in extreme cases reaching 300 years. Mrs. Crimsonbeck—And, remember, John, the swan lives on water.

"There are two necessary things to know in order to be successful in politics," said Jones. "And they are?" queried Smith. "First, how to get into it; then, what you're going to get out of it."

"It appears to be your record, Mary Moselle," said the magistrate, "that you have been thirty-five times convicted of stealing." "I guess, Your Honor," replied Mary, "that is right. No woman is perfect."

A widow, being cautioned by her minister about flirting, said she knew it was wrong for maidens and wives to flirt, but the Bible was her authority. It said, "Widows mite." She was flirting awfully at last accounts.

"I'll take your damage case," said the lawyer, helping to his feet the man just hit by an automobile. "Thank you," replied the victim. "I'm not much hurt, but I recognized that measly chauffeur. He may have a case for you later."

"Why," said Bobby to his elder brother, "do her-ring have so many more illnesses than other fish?" "Who says they do?" asked the youth addressed. "Why, this book says that thousands upon thousands of them are cured every year."

PEARY'S BOY GUIDE

—OR—

ICEBOUND IN THE ARCTIC

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XI (Continued).

"Jerry obeyed, and May cut the prisoner's bonds, aimed his revolver at the young Irishman and hissed in savage tones:

"Jump overboard an' swim ashore!"

"I s'pose I'll have ter. I'm desperate, I am. An' when yer meet Peary an' Jack Buntline tell 'em fer me as this is my revenge fer wot they done ter me—see?"

Terry saw the two sailors swimming away, and plunging into the cold water, he swam away after them toward the shore.

The assistant engineer was now released, and May said to him in the most threatening tones he could assume:

"We are ther bosses here now. Both of us is armed an' ready ter shoot ther fust one wot don't do exactly wot we tell 'em—see?"

"What do you want of me?" demanded Johnson.

"We wants yer ter start ther engines, as we are a-goin' ter git off with this craft as soon as we kin slip ther cable. If yer don't obey my orders yer life won't be worth two cents."

Seeing that he was at their mercy, the man assented to their plan, more especially as Jerry went down in the engine-room with him and held him covered with a pistol while he got the machinery going.

May let the anchor go, and going into the wheel-house, he steered the vessel away, and she was soon buried in a fog-bank.

In the meantime the three swimmers reached shore and told the men in camp what had befallen them on the ship.

When they got on dry clothing a council of war was held; but they could see nothing but misfortune ahead, and dreaded the time when Peary would return and they would have to tell him the bad news.

CHAPTER XII.

ATTACKED BY SAVAGES

A serious look settled upon the face of the explorer when he heard about the loss of his ship, and he closely questioned Terry about the matter, and after a few moment's thought he said to Jack:

"As this man said, we are ice-bound in the Arctic."

"The gold on board the ship was what tempted the rascals to get away with the Roosevelt, of course," commented the boy. "But the question is, are those two villains competent to manage the vessel alone?"

"Oh, they will press the engineer into their service," answered Peary, thoughtfully. "Alone they could not get very far."

"Then you have little hope of ever recovering your vessel?"

"Not much, Jack."

"Other ships may come this way and pick us up."

"The chance is a very slim one. We have plenty of provisions, I am glad to say and a shelter against storms and cold, but they will not last forever, you know. We can do nothing about recovering the ship, so I propose that we try to forget our misfortune and get along the best way over to the camp."

"But, begorry," said Terry, "yer haven't blamed me a bit, sor."

"What's the use? I am sure that you did not let them get the best of you on purpose, Terry. I know you to be a cautious and reliable man, and I am sure that if they got the upper hand of you it was through no fault of your own. Don't feel downhearted over it, my boy."

"Would yez luck at that now!" gasped the young Irishman in tones of deep admiration. "Mr. Perry, sor, it's a gintleman yez are, every inch av ye. An' ye kin shtake yer loife that it wor owin' ter no carelessness on my part that they got ther ship."

They all went on to the camp, and after talking over their loss with the rest, Peary gave them an account of their trip to the north.

"And now," he said in conclusion, "I intend to keep right on working at establishing our northern basis of supply just the same as if we had not lost the ship. We can do nothing to recover the Roosevelt."

Jack was very much worried over the loss of the vessel, and he took Grace aside and said to her in troubled tones:

"It isn't the loss of the gold I am worried about, but it is a source of anxiety to me to think that you must share our danger here."

"Oh, don't you worry about me, Jack," the brave girl answered. "As long as I am under your protection I do not feel the least bit of fear over our situation. I have an idea that we will get out of this dreary place some time if we only have patience."

"Let us go on top of the cliff every day and see if we can see anything of the missing ship. It will give us something to do to pass away the time. There is the path over by the wall."

They went up on the cliff-top, and Grace asked him:

"When is the commander going to start off on the second trip north?"

"It will take a week to get ready."

"Are you going with him, Jack?"

(To be continued.)

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

WILLS ALL TO WILSON.

Written on the leaf of a magazine and bequeathing his all, amounting to \$140.95, to President Wilson in order that he "might succeed in bringing everlasting peace," the will of J. Y. Garcia, Salinas, Cal., a native of the Philippine Islands, was read here recently. The will concluded:

"I am sorry I could not find any flag of the United States of America in order that I might place it over my heart when I close my eyes."

Garcia died recently at the Monterey County Hospital.

SALON TO BECOME CANTEEN.

The rooms of the so-called Presidential and diplomatic suite at the Union Railroad Station in Washington, formerly used only for state purposes, are to be taken possession of immediately by the American Red Cross and converted into a railroad canteen for soldiers, sailors, and marines passing through Washington to and from the battlefield in France. President Wilson authorized the use of the suite for that purpose.

Shower baths will be installed and adjoining the suite there will be a first-aid room, an operating room, and an examining room, and a sixteen-bed transfer hospital attached to the canteen. An information booth and a checkroom will be installed.

The big reception salon of the suite is to be transformed into a rest room for the men, with a phonograph, a piano, desks, magazines, newspapers and telephone booths. The solarium, or east porch of the Presidential suite, will be fitted up as a Summer garden, with box flowers, tables, chairs, and benches. The reception lobby is to be used as a dining room, where light refreshments will be served to soldiers, sailors and marines.

THIEVES LOCK UP CLERK.

Two thieves who were dissatisfied with the amount of money they found in the cash register in a United Cigar Store, at 12 Delancey Street, New York, the other day, locked the salesman in a closet and continued the business until the proceeds satisfied them. Even if they had put the money into the cash register, Abraham Zucker, the clerk, said that the store would have been the loser. He was looking through a keyhole.

"They sold three cigars for a dime and then kept the money," he said. "And the coupons! They gave away enough coupons to furnish a house and buy enough golf balls for a season."

When the two robbers tired of playing salesmen they went into a telephone booth and called up their friends to make engagements for the afternoon. The men had disappeared when the clerk escaped from the closet. They stole about \$300.

WHAT WILL WIN THE WAR?

The New York Tribune recently said editorially that "Victory is a question of means," and then it went on to list the means. These are:

First, the raw materials.

Second, the plants where raw materials are converted by industrial processes into sinews of war.

Third, the labor to act upon the raw materials.

Fourth, the fighting man power in uniform.

Fifth, transportation.

Labor and materials, in other words, are what are necessary to win the war. What, then, is the duty of all of us? Obviously what we must do is to produce all that is possible and consume as little as necessary and give the Government our utmost financial support.

If we follow this creed, we shall leave for the Government more labor and materials for strictly war purposes and we shall accumulate savings for investment in War Savings Stamps. Thus we shall help both the Government and ourselves.

HORSE MARINES.

The immortal Captain Jinks made his bow to the public just fifty years ago. Yet even now the horse marines, which we celebrate in song, are everywhere regarded as a joke.

To look upon them in that light is, however, a mistake, according to the Public Ledger. The horse marines exist. We have them in our own service. There are at the present time two companies of them in Cuba, helping to maintain order. More of them are in Haiti and San Domingo, where recently they have been doing good work in suppressing revolutions. We have a small force of horse marines at Peking, in China, where they guard the American Legation.

We have no horse marines in France, but later on we might use them over there. It depends on whether the emergency called for them.

The United States Marine Corps is the Army of the Navy. The horse marines are its cavalry. It has also artillery, signalmen and even aviators. Marines are the most versatile fighters in the world. They can fight either afloat or on land.

They are taught how to ride, for there is no telling when they may be called upon to act as mounted infantry—in other words, as horse marines. In any such case their mounts are supplied by the War Department; the marine corps keeps no horses of its own. Each horse marine carries a rifle and a pistol.

Our marines may be seen on donkeys in China, on camels in Egypt, on water buffaloes in the Philippines. They are web-footed and would ride porpoises if they had a chance.



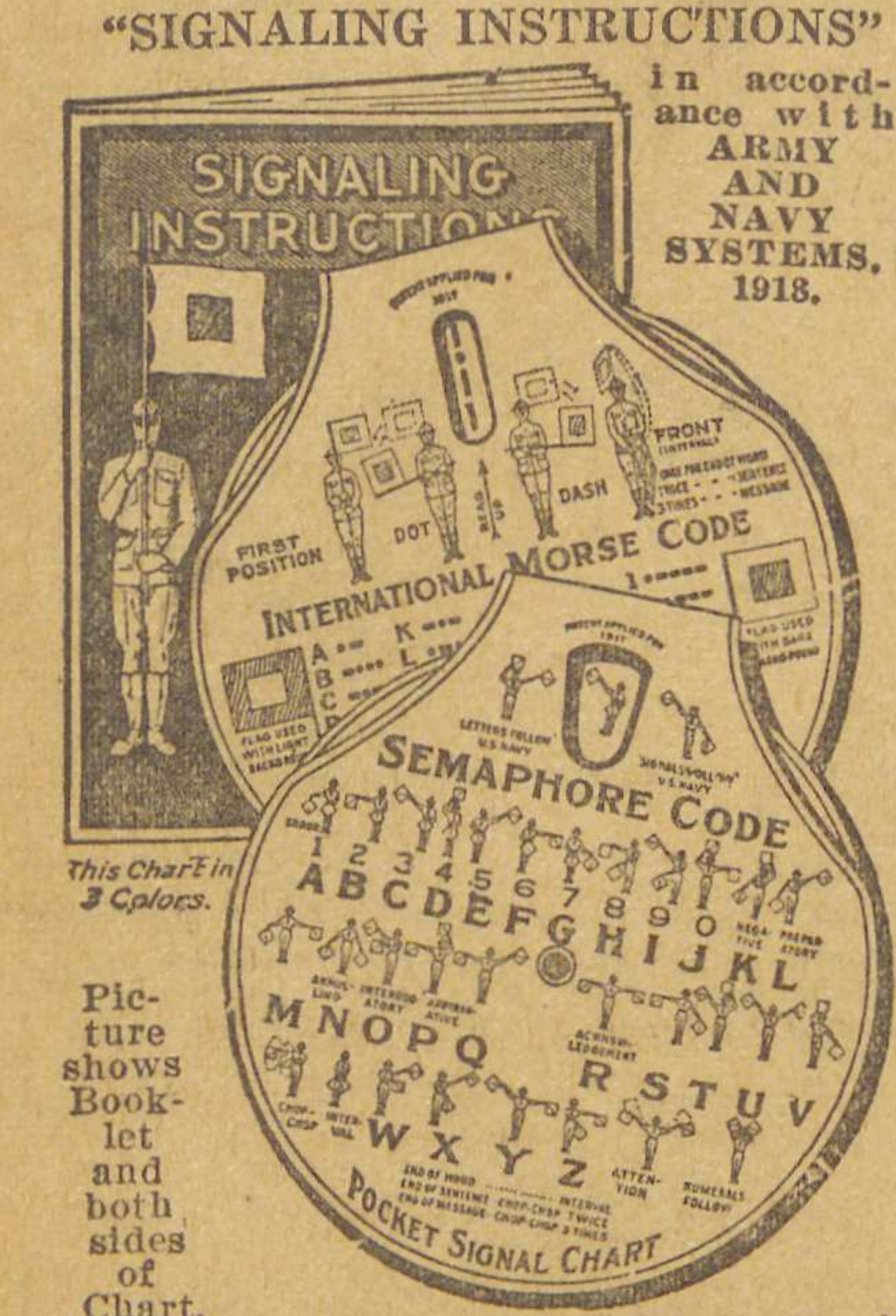
STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.

The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price, 10 cents; 3 for 25 cents, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., New York.

POCKET SIGNAL CHART

International Morse Code on one side and Semaphore Code on the other, issued with booklet, "SIGNALING INSTRUCTIONS"



in accordance with ARMY AND NAVY SYSTEMS, 1918.

This Chart in 3 Colors.

Picture shows Booklet and both sides of Chart.

By the use of this Chart with its revolving wheel the Codes are quickly learned. After a brief study of the Chart, signals are read and verified immediately. Can be operated with one hand while the other writes. This is the Chart in use by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Lone Scouts and similar organizations, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, Schools, and is also good to send to friends in our country's service.

The booklet is given FREE with the Chart. Send 15 Cents and we will send you the Chart and Booklet, by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

DIAMOND SQUIRT RING.



A handsome Gilt ring set with a brilliant, a close imitation of a diamond. Connected with the ring is a small rubber ball filled with water, which is concealed in the palm of your hand. As your friend is admiring the stone in your ring, a gentle pressure on the ball will throw a small stream of water into his face. The ball can be instantly filled by immersing it in water, when you are ready for your next victim. The ball is entirely hidden in the palm of your hand, and only the ring is seen. Price 25 cents, by mail, postpaid.

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POCKET SAVINGS BANK.

A perfect little bank, handsomely nickel plated. Holds just five dollars (50 dimes). It cannot be opened until the bank is full, when it can be readily emptied and relocked, ready to be again refilled. Every parent should see that their children have a small savings bank, as the early habit of saving their dimes is of the greatest importance. Habits formed in early life are seldom forgotten in later years. Price of this little bank, 15c, mailed, postpaid.

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THE FRIGHTFUL RATTLESNAKE!



To all appearances it is a harmless piece of coiled paper with a mouthpiece attachment, but upon placing it to one's mouth, and blowing into the tube, an imitation snake over two feet in length springs out of the roll like a flash of lightning, producing a whistling, fluttering sound that would frighten a wild Indian. We guarantee our rattlesnake not to bite, but would not advise you to play the joke on timid women or delicate children. Each snake packed in a box. Price, 10c; 3 for 25; mailed, postpaid.

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GOOD LUCK BANKS.



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickeled brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 15c, by mail.

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An exact imitation of a pack of the finest quality playing cards in a very neat case. You hand the package to your friend, requesting him to shuffle the cards, and as he attempts to do so a cap inside explodes loud enough to make him see stars. Price 25c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., New York.



or choice of 44 styles, colors and sizes in the famous Ranger line of bicycles for you to keep and use a month as your own. **Would You** then agree to show your bicycle to ten or more of your friends and tell them the ridiculously low factory price, easy terms, unusual conditions and exceptional offers I would make, all of which I will explain to you if within ten days of seeing this you will say in a letter or on a postal, "Send particulars of Bicycle Offer" and address your postal card or letter:

Personal for G. L. LEWIS, Manager
MEAD CYCLE CO., 188 Mead Block, Chicago

BINGO.

It is a little metal box. It looks very innocent, but is supplied with an ingenious mechanism which shoots off a harmless cap when it is opened. You can have more fun than a circus with this new trick. Place the BINGO in or under any other article and it will go off when the article is opened or removed. It can be used as a funny joke by being placed in a purse, cigarette box, or between the leaves of a magazine; also, under any movable article, such as a book, tray, dish, etc. The BINGO can also be used as a burglar alarm, as a theft preventer by being placed in a drawer, money till, or under a door or window or under any article that would be moved or disturbed should a theft be attempted. Price, 15c. each by mail, postpaid.

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HJALMAR NELSON, (address on application,) whose photo appears at the left, learned of a book and other information being given FREE, explaining how Tobacco Habit can be conquered by oneself, safely, speedily and completely. He obtained the information and is now able to report a gain of 25 pounds in weight (from 163 to 188 pounds), as well as

A THREE DAYS' VICTORY OVER SLAVERY TO TOBACCO HABIT

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"I have no craving for tobacco; this I consider wonderful after having used a pipe for 35 years. I have gained 12 pounds in two months, which is very good at the age of 59 years. To say that the benefits far exceed my expectations, is putting it mildly. Anyone in doubt can refer to me."—John Brodie, (No. 153235), Wapello Co., Iowa. (Full address on application.)

"I had weighed as low as 128 pounds, never got over 135 while I used tobacco. Now I weigh 156 pounds. Everyone wants to know why I got so fleshy; I tell them to follow Edward J. Woods' method for overcoming tobacco and find out."—W. S. Morgan, (No. 11815 K), Cooke Co., Tex. (Full address on application.)

"I smoked for more than 20 years, but now I am proud to say that for the past nine months I have no crave for smoking; I feel better and am gaining in weight every month since I stopped."—William Crawford, (No. 206737), Philadelphia Co., Penna. (Full address on application.)

"May God bless you. I am feeling finer every day of my life—not like the same person. "My appetite is better, and my stomach is all right. I can hold out in walking better, my voice is better and my heart is stronger."—Mrs. Mattie E. Stevenson, (No. 230738), St. John Co., Fla. (Full address on application.)

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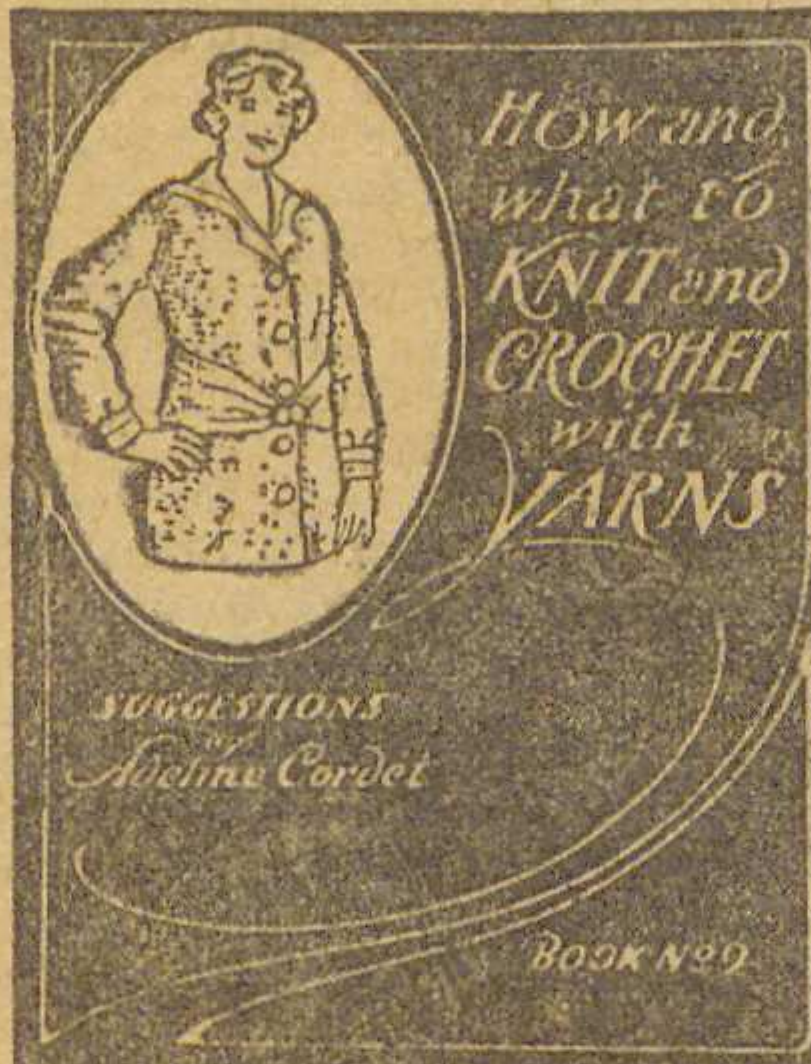
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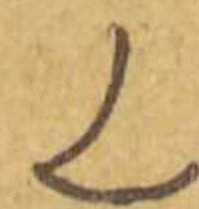
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